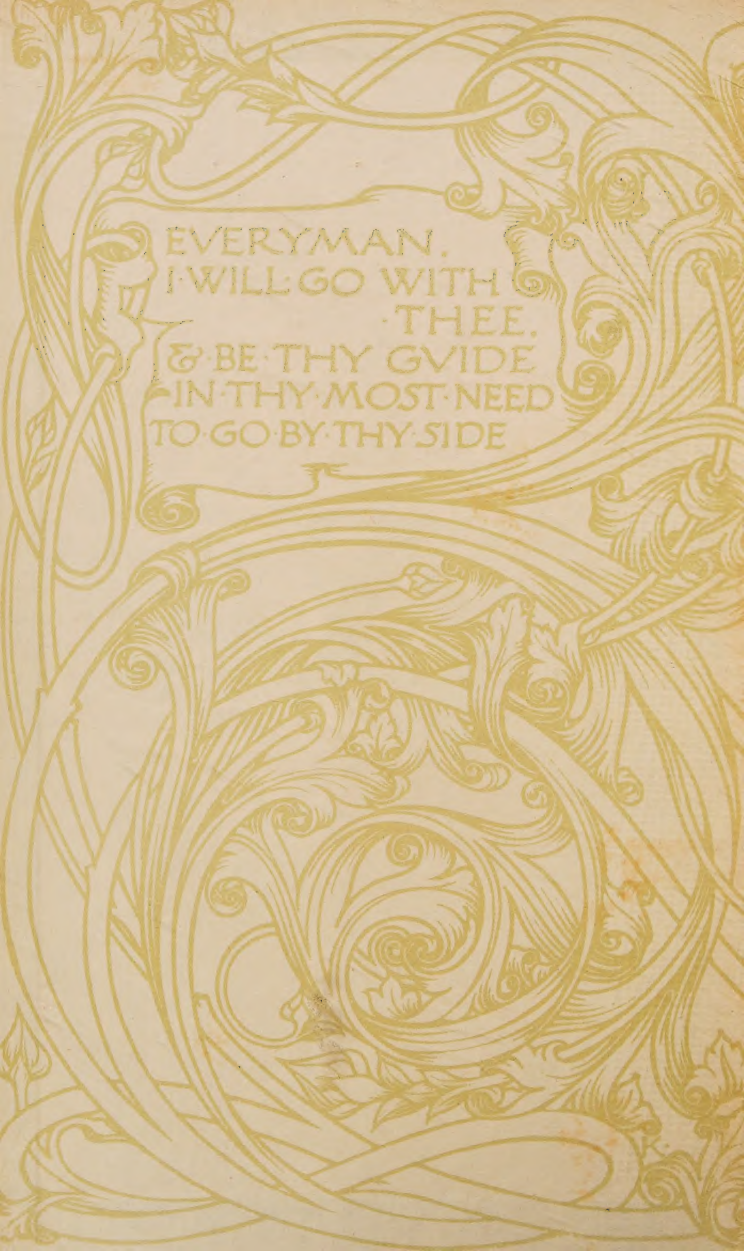

EVERYMAN.
I WILL GO WITH
THEE.
& BE THY GVIDE
IN THY MOST NEED
TO GO BY THY SIDE

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

Deoman Muckle

EVERYMAN'S LIBRARY
EDITED BY ERNEST RHYS

THEOLOGY &
PHILOSOPHY

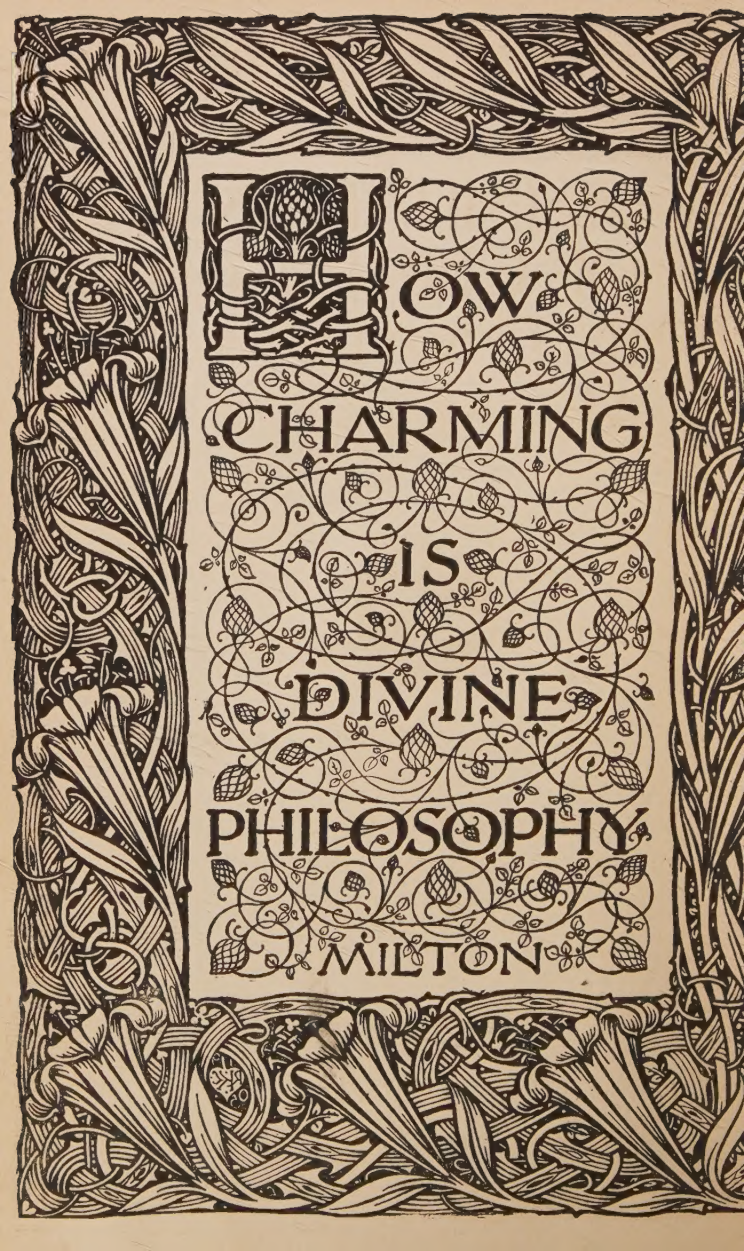
IMITATION OF CHRIST
BY THOMAS À KEMPIS

THIS IS NO. 484 OF *EVERYMAN'S LIBRARY*. THE PUBLISHERS WILL BE PLEASED TO SEND FREELY TO ALL APPLICANTS A LIST OF THE PUBLISHED AND PROJECTED VOLUMES ARRANGED UNDER THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS:

TRAVEL ❦ SCIENCE ❦ FICTION
THEOLOGY & PHILOSOPHY
HISTORY ❦ CLASSICAL
FOR YOUNG PEOPLE
ESSAYS ❦ ORATORY
POETRY & DRAMA
BIOGRAPHY
REFERENCE
ROMANCE

THE ORDINARY EDITION IS BOUND IN CLOTH WITH GILT DESIGN AND COLOURED TOP. THERE IS ALSO A LIBRARY EDITION IN REINFORCED CLOTH

J. M. DENT & SONS LTD.
ALDINE HOUSE, BEDFORD STREET, LONDON, W.C.2
E. P. DUTTON & CO.
681 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK


HOW
CHARMING
IS
DIVINE
PHILOSOPHY
MILTON

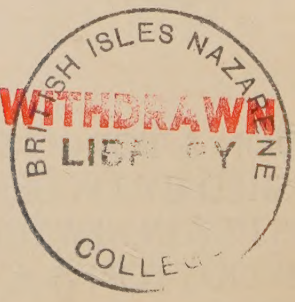
The IMITATION OF CHRIST

By THOMAS AKEMPIS

LONDON & TORONTO
PUBLISHED BY J·M·DENT
& SONS LTD & IN NEW YORK
BY E·P·DUTTON & CO

10346

FIRST ISSUE OF THIS EDITION . 1910
REPRINTED. 1913, 1916, 1919, 1925, 1928



WITHDRAWN
LIBRARY

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

INTRODUCTION

All other thinges in the worlde saue oonly to loue god and serue him allone are vanite of vanites and all vanite.

No need to waste the reader's time by eulogy of the little book known as the *Imitation of Christ*. Five centuries and a score of languages have set on it their mark; it is the one book of devotion apart from the Bible which has not loosened its hold upon the Christian world; and it would not be astonishing if the present century, in which mystic writing is again read, should see the book appealing to an even wider public than that which has read and re-read it, and has sedulously kept its secret hidden. For no people who really value the *Imitation* care to talk at length, and to talk well, about the volume; perhaps they cannot say what it means to them; it is a sacred thing.

But there is no objection to the enumeration of a few outer facts regarding the book. These the reader ought to welcome; and, if he knows them, will be glad to hear them once more.

The book is called the *Imitation of Christ*, or, more briefly, the *Imitation*. This is a misnomer; the title is taken from the first chapter, and signifies not the imitation but the following of Christ. Even this title is sanctioned only by usage, for the book deals with many other subjects than the Following. Many manuscripts, including that from which Books I.-III. are here transcribed, call the book Musica Ecclesiastica, or Church Music. This second title is by no means popular, and even if we admit that the book was originally written in a rough rhythm the words Church Music do not convey much to the mind. For the average reader the book will remain—the *Imitation*.

The *Imitation* was written in Latin and, according to the last words of one of the most important manuscripts, was "finished and completed in the year of our Lord 1441 by

the hands of Brother Thomas Kempis in Mount Saint Agnes near Zwolle." This manuscript is now at Brussels. There are, however, in other places, twenty-two MSS. dated before 1441, and it is said that fragments of a translation into a Dutch dialect can be found as early as 1423. The first printed edition appeared in 1471. No MSS. prior to 1441 are known to have existed in England.

There is no means of proving the authorship satisfactorily. The book might have been "finished and completed" by Thomas Kempis (*i.e.*, Thomas of Kempen), but not necessarily composed by him, and even from early times claims were made for John Gersen or Gerson, St. Bernard, and others. The question may be studied elsewhere; but it may be noted that the humility which the composer inculcated on every page has followed him beyond the grave. He has not been canonised or beatified; he is scarcely claimed by any church; he is not even definitely known. How he would have rejoiced at not receiving undivided world-wide honour; how he would have criticised the critics who wax hot over the question of the authorship and lay no stress on the book which is a possession for evermore. "Loue to not be knowen and to be accountyd as naught."

That the book was the work of one living as a priest and as a monk under a Rule is clear from many passages in the fourth book and from an occasional hint elsewhere; that it was the work of a mystic may be established from the phrasing in Book III.; but beyond this it is not safe to dogmatise. It contains no reference to contemporary history or persons; its learning is slight and unaffected; its composition is simple; it abounds in reiterations and shows no sign of condensation; it looks as though its chief revision had been that of one who wished not to know what went on outside the convent walls; the world is absent from its pages. Yet the analysis of men's motives is keen, the description of their moods vivid, and the author is by no means backward in studying and criticising types of his immediate neighbours.

From these vague hints may we suppose that the writer was a Religious, one who dreamed and woke and dreamed again, one who had at one time lived in the hubbub of the

world, but who was at the time of writing waiting for his call to the "country of everlasting clearness"?

Does this picture fit in with what we know of Thomas Haemmerlein or Hemercker of Kempen (1380-1471)? He was the son of John and Gertrude Haemmerlein of Kempen, near Cologne. At the age of thirteen he joined the Brothers of Common Life at Deventer and went to school in that town: his elder brother was prior of the Regular Canons of Mount Saint Agnes, near Zwolle, and to this place Thomas soon followed. He became a priest and was chosen sub-prior on two separate occasions, and for many years was prior. If he did write the *Imitation* it is his greatest work, for the other writings which bear his name show few traces of the fire divine.

The present translation is the first English translation slightly modernised in spelling and syntax. Very little change has been made, except when the early version is unintelligible. This first English translation of Books I.-III. is, like its great original, a mystery: it is anonymous; two copies only exist, one in Dublin and one in Cambridge. These have been collated and edited by the late Professor Ingram, who published his beautiful edition for the Early English Text Society. To Dr. Ingram and Professor Furnivall the present editor owes his hearty thanks for permission to use the E.E.T.S. volume. As a translation the fourth book, which is definitely dated and has a translator's name attached, is inferior in workmanship.

From internal evidence it may be said that the translation of Books I.-III. is the work of some one in a convent, possibly in Holland (for Dutch idioms occur even in the English); that the translator is sometimes unskilful, knowing perhaps a certain amount of Latin, but having forgotten some of his or her English. The book is full of slight mistakes and of (to us) infelicitous Latinisms of vocabulary and syntax; but none can question the quaint beauty and the mystical charm which the vague phrases leave upon the ear. The *Imitation* ought never to be shown to the reading public in an entirely modern dress, and it has been my aim to preserve to the full the old-world flavour. I cannot, however, forbear quoting two passages in their

true form, hoping that the reader may be led to Professor Ingram's book.

"The crosse, therefore, is euer redy and ouer all it abideth the: thou maist not fle it wher euer thou renne; and where euer thou come thou berist thiself with the and euer thou shalt finde thiself. Turne thiself aboue, turne thiself nether, turne thiself outwarde, turne thiself inwarde; and in all these shalt thou finde the crosse: and ouer all it is nedeful to the to kepe pacience if thou wolt haue inwarde pes and deserue a crovne euerlasting. If thou bere the crosse gladly it shal bere the, and lede the to a desiderable ende where as an ende shal be of suffryng though it be not here." (II., xii.)

"Sone in many thinges suppose thiself as dede upon the erthe and to whom all the worlde be crucified; and many thinges thou must pass ouer with a deef ere and thenke rather on tho thinges that longith to thi pes. It is more profitable to turne awey thin eye fro thinges that displesen and to leue every man his ovne felynge than to stryue with contenciose wordes. If thou stonde wel with god and beholde his iugement thou shalt bere it the more esily if thou be ouer comen. O lorde, whider are we comen? Lo temporal harme is sorwed we laborith and rennith for litel getyng and spiritual harme is foryeten and unnethe late cometh to mynde agen. That that avalith litel or naught is take hede to, and that is souerainly necessary is negligently passed ouer; for man flowith all oute to outwarde thinges, and but he turne sone ayen, gladly he lieth and restith in outwarde thinges." (III., lxix.)

I am quite contented to be a guide and only a guide, to this mysterious translation. To me it has the sense of ecstasy, the other-worldliness, the spiritual uncannyness of the great Latin book; but over and beyond this it is the most beautiful if the most incorrect of all English versions. On its quiet surface, as of a lake, is the light of the fifteenth century; the wrinkled brows and the hesitating hands of its pious and forgotten writer are clearly seen in its out-of-the-way spellings and its curious phrases; the mosses and lichens of a ruined abbey more beautiful to us than to its contemporaries hang round its uneven and

weather-worn sentences. Who can read its pathetic English without being knit, in some moods at least, with the brother or sister who, possibly with grammar and dictionary at his side, laboriously penned for the community the first English version of the book destined to be known wherever the Christian soul desires union with its God?

"Defende and kepe the soule of thy litel seruaunt amonge so many perels of this corruptible lyf and, thy grace goyng with, dresse hym by the way of pes to the cuntrey of euerlasting clerenes."

The following books will be found useful:—

Cruise, Dr. F. R., *Thomas à Kempis: Notes of a Visit to the Scenes of his Life.* Ill. Paul, 1887. 12s.

Dr. J. K. Ingram, Translations of the *De Imitatione Christi.* E.E.T.S., Paul, 1893. 15s.

Hirsche, Dr. C., *Thomae Kempensis Libri Quatuor.* Habel, Berlin, 1884. 5s.

Kettlewell, Rev. S., *Thomas à Kempis and the Brothers of Common Life,* 2 vols. Paul, 1882. 30s.

Wheatley, L. A, *The Story of the Imitatio Christi.* Stock, 1891. 4s. 6d.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

WORKS:—The earliest edition, which does not contain De Imitatione Christi, is that printed at Utrecht, 1473; the first edition in which it does appear is the one edited by P. Danhauser, printed in Nuremberg, 1494. More complete than any previous edition, of which there are many, is that of Sommalius, 3 vols., Antwerp, 1601. There is in course of issue a new critical text, Thomae Hemerken à Kempis Opera Omnia, ed. M. J. Pohl, in 7 vols., of which the greater part is now published, Freibourg, 1904.

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF COMPLETE WORKS OR COLLECTIONS OF WORKS:—The genuine works of Thomas à Kempis, translated by Geo. Hickes, 2 vols., London, 1707, the first volume having been issued as The Christian's Pattern, or the Imitation of Jesus Christ. The Christian's Exercise, or Rules to Live above the World while we are in it, translated by R. Nelson, London, 1715. An edition in 9 vols. of The Works of Thomas à Kempis, in English, is now in course of publication, some of the volumes being translated from the text of Dr. Pohl, London 1904, etc.

The above are the original editions of all the works except De Imitatione Christi et contemptu mundi, of which the first edition is the undated one printed at Augsburg. The first dated edition is that printed at Tubingen, 1472.

TRANSLATIONS OF SEPARATE WORKS:—

The first English translation of THE IMITATION OF CHRIST is that printed by Wynkyn de Worde; the first three books Englished from the Latin by William Atkynson, D.D., and the fourth from the French by Princess Margaret, Countess of Richmond, London, 1504. After this come the translations by Richd. Whitforde, London, 1556; Edward Hake, London, 1567; T. Rogers, London, 1580; F. B. [Antony Hoskins?], 1613; Thomas Carre, Paris, 1624; William Page, 1639; George Stanhope, London, 1696; Willymott, London, 1722; S. Smith, London, 1732; J. Wesley, 1735; Richard Chalonner, London, 1737; H. Lee, London, 1760; John Payne, London, 1763; Thomas F. Dibdin, London, 1828; Samuel Jackson, London, 1831; Harvey Goodwin, Cambridge, 1860; J. H. Friswell, London, 1865; W. Benham, London, 1874; W. H. Hutchings, London, 1881; S. M'Kenna, Dublin, 1896; W. A. Coppinger, Glasgow, 1900; C. K. Paul and T. A. Pope, London, 1907.

There are also paraphrases in verse by different authors published in 1694, 1697, 1868, 1889.

THE LITTLE GARDEN OF ROSES:—The Little Garden of Roses and Valley of Lilies, London, 1843; Glasgow, 1891; Little Garden of Roses and Soliloquy of the Soul, translated by W. B. Flower, London, 1853.

PRAYERS AND MEDITATIONS:—Prayers and Meditations on the Life of Christ, translated by Thomas Carre, Paris, 1664; by Henry Lee, London, 1760; by Wright and Kettlewell, Oxford and London, 1892; by W. Duthoit, London, 1904.

SOLILOQUIES OF THE SOUL:—Soliloquium Animæ; or, The Soletalk of the Soul, translated by Thomas Rogers, London, 1592; Thomas of Kempis, his Soliloquies, translated by T. Carre, Paris, 1653; The

Soliloquies of the Soul and the Dialogue of Novices, London, 1843; with Little Garden of Roses, translated by W. B. Flower, London, 1853; The Soliloquy of the Soul, London, 1883.

The Valley of Lilies:—With Little Garden of Roses, London, 1843; separately, Oxford and London, 1855; with Imitation of Christ, London, 1909.

The Christian Traveller:—Viator Christianus; or, The Christian Traveller, Dublin, 1804; The Christian Traveller, Dublin, 1860.

Lives of Gerard Groote, Florentin Radewin, and their Followers (Founders of the New Devotion), translated by J. P. Arthur, London, 1907.

The Chronicle of the Canons Regular of Mount St. Agnes, translated by J. P. Arthur, London, 1906.

Sermons on the Incarnation and Passion of Jesus Christ, translated by T. Carre, Paris, 1654.

A Meditation on the Incarnation of Christ and Sermons on the Life and Passion of our Lord, translated by V. Scully, London, 1907.

Life:—The only early biographies of Thomas à Kempis are the few pages in some of the Latin editions of his works mentioned above. There is a Life of him in the English edition of the works translated by Geo. Hickes, 1707. Beyond this there are the following:—Thomas à Kempis and the Brothers of Common Life, by the Rev. S. Kettlewell, 2 vols., London, 1882; Thomas à Kempis: Notes of a Visit to Scenes in which his Life was spent, by Sir F. R. Cruise, London, 1887; Life of the Venerable Thomas à Kempis, by the Ven. C. Scully, London, 1901; Thomas à Kempis, his Age and his Book, by J. E. G., De Montmorency, London, 1906.

CONTENTS

PART I

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	Of Following of Christ and Despising of all Worldly Vanities	1
II.	Of Meek Knowing of a Man's Self	3
III.	Of the Teaching of Truth	5
IV.	Of Prudence in Man's Works	9
V.	Of Reading of the Scriptures	10
VI.	Of Inordinate Affections	11
VII.	Of Fleeing from Vain Hope and Elation	12
VIII.	Of Eschewing of too great Familiarity	14
IX.	Of Obedience and Subjection	15
X.	Of Eschewing Superfluity of Words	16
XI.	Of Peace to be Gotten and Zeal for Profiting	17
XII.	Of the Profit of Adversity	19
XIII.	Of Withstanding of Temptation	20
XIV.	Of Fleeing Rash Judgment	23
XV.	Of Works done in Charity	25
XVI.	Of Bearing other Men's Infirmities and Faults	27
XVII.	Of the Religious Life	29
XVIII.	Of the Examples of the Holy Fathers	30
XIX.	Of the Exercises of a Good Religious Man	33
XX.	Of Love of Silence and to be Alone	36
XXI.	Of Compunction of Heart	40
XXII.	Of Consideration of Man's Misery	43
XXIII.	Of Meditation of Death	46
XXIV.	Of the Judgment and of the Pains of Sinners	50
XXV.	Of the Fervent Amendment of all of a Man's Life	54

PART II

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	Of Inward Conversation	59
II.	Of Meek Submission	63
III.	Of a Good Peaceable Man	65
IV.	Of Pure and Simple Intention	67
V.	Of Consideration of Oneself	69
VI.	Of the Gladness of a Good Conscience	71
VII.	Of the Love of Jesu above all Things	73
VIII.	Of the Familiar Friendship of Jesu	75
IX.	Of Lacking of all Manner of Solace	78
X.	Of Thanks for the Grace of God	82
XI.	Of the Fewness of the Lovers of the Cross of Christ	85
XII.	Of the King's Highway of the Cross	87

PART III

I.	Of the Inward Speaking of Christ unto a True Soul	93
II.	That the Words of God are to be heard with Meekness	95
III.	That the Words of God are to be heard with Meekness	97
IV.	A Prayer to ask Grace of Devotion	100
V.	That a Man ought to live before God in Truth and in Meekness	101
VI.	Of the Wonderful Effect of the Love of God	104
VII.	Of Proving of True Love	107
VIII.	Of Grace to be hid under the Word of Meekness	110
IX.	Of Vile Estimation of Oneself in the Sight of God	113
X.	That all Things are to be referred to God as to the last end	115
XI.	That, the World despised, it is merry and sweet for to serve God	117
XII.	That the Desires of the Heart must be examined and modered (moderated)	120

CHAP.		PAGE
XIII.	Of the learning of Patience and fighting against Concupiscence	122
XIV.	Of Obedience of a Meek Subject by Ensample of our Lord Jesu	124
XV.	Of Considering the Privy Judgments of God against Pride	126
XVI.	How a Man shall stand in everything desired	128
XVII.	A Prayer to do the Will of God	130
XVIII.	That True Solace is to be sought in God alone	131
XIX.	That all Business is to be set in God	133
XX.	That Temporal Miseries are to be suffered by the Ensample of Christ	135
XXI.	Of Suffering of Wrongs and who is proved very Patient	137
XXII.	Of Knowledge of our Infirmity and of Miseries of this Life	139
XXIII.	That Man ought to rest in God above all Things	141
XXIV.	Of Recording (Remembering) the Manifold Benefits of God	144
XXV.	Of Four Things bringing Great Peace	147
XXVI.	Against Evil Thoughts	148
XXVII.	A Prayer for Illumination of Mind	149
XXVIII.	Of Eschewing curious Inquisition of another Man's Life	150
XXIX.	Wherein standeth Peace of Heart and True Profiting	151
XXX.	Of the Excellence of a Free Mind and how it is rather gotten by Prayer than by Reading	153
XXXI.	That Private Love most tarrieth a Man from the highest Good	155
XXXII.	A Prayer for Purgation of Heart and Heavenly Wisdom	157
XXXIII.	Against the Tongues of Detractors	158
XXXIV.	That in Time of Tribulation God is Inwardly to be called upon and to be Blessed	159
XXXV.	Of Asking of God's Help and Trust in Recovering Grace	160

CHAP.		PAGE
XXXVI.	Of Recking never of all Creatures so the Creator may be Found	163
XXXVII.	Of Denying Oneself and Forsaking of all Cupidity	166
XXXVIII.	Of Unstableness of Heart and of Intention to be had towards God	168
XXXIX.	To Him that Loveth, God Savoureth above all Things	169
XL.	That there is no Surety from Temptation in this Life	171
XLI.	Against Men's Vain Judgments	173
XLII.	Of Pure Resignation of a Man's Self	175
XLIII.	Of Good Governance in Outward Things	177
XLIV.	That Man be not too busy in Worldly Business	179
XLV.	That a Man hath no good of Himself whereof to Rejoice	180
XLVI.	Of Contempt of all Honour	182
XLVII.	That Peace is not to be set (put) in Men	183
XLVIII.	Against Vain and Secular Knowledge	185
XLIX.	Of not Attracting Outward Things to a Man	187
L.	That it is not Right to believe all Men and of Light Lapse of Words	188
LI.	Of Trust to be had in God against Evil Words	191
LII.	That all Grievous Things are to be suffered for the Life to come	194
LIII.	Of the Day of Eternity and the Anguish of this Life	196
LIV.	Of Desire of Everlasting Life and how Great Things are promised to Fighters	199
LV.	That the Desolate Man ought to offer Himself into the Hands of God	203
LVI.	That Man must give Himself to Low Works when High Works Fail	207
LVII.	That Man should account Himself worthy of no Consolation	208
LVIII.	That Grace is not Part of them that follow Earthly Things	210
LIX.	Of Diverse Movings of Nature and of Grace	212
LX.	Of Corruption of Nature and of the Might of Grace	216

CHAP. PAGE

LXI. That we ought to deny Ourselves and follow Christ by the Cross 219

LXII. That a Man (must) not be thrown down too much if he fall in any Faults 221

LXIII. High Things and Privy Judgments of God must not be Searched 223

LXIV. That all Hope and Trust is to be fixed only in God 227

PART IV

Prologus 229

I. In what great Reverence and Fervent Desire we ought to receive our Lord Jesu Christ . . 230

II. How the Great Charity and Bounty of God is shewed unto Man in the Holy Sacrament . . . 236

III. What great Profit it is often to receive the Body of our Lord Jesu Christ 240

IV. How many Advantages be given unto them that Devoutly receive this Holy Sacrament . . 243

V. Of the Dignity of the Sacrament of the Altar and of the Order of Priesthood 247

VI. An Inward Remembrance and Exercise that a Man ought to have afore the receiving of the Body of our Lord Jesu Christ 250

VII. The Remembring of his own Conscience with Purpose of Amendment 251

VIII. Of the Oblacion of Jesu Christ on the Cross; of the Proper Resignation that Man should make of Himself 254

IX. That we ought to offer unto God all that we have, and to Pray for all People 255

X. That the Holy Sacrament ought not Lightly to be Forborne 258

XI. How the Blessed Body of our Lord Jesu Christ is greatly necessary for the Health of Man's Soul . 262

XII. With how great Diligence he ought to prepare himself that should receive the Sacrament of Christ . 267

CHAP. PAGE

XIII. How the Devout Soul ought Effectually with all his Heart to be united unto Jesu Christ . . . 270

XIV. Of the Burning Desire that some Creatures have to the Blessed Body of our Lord Jesu Christ . . 272

XV. How Meekly thou oughtest to beseech the Grace of Devotion and to renounce Thyself . . . 274

XVI. How we ought to show our Necessities unto Jesu Christ and ask of him Benign Grace . . . 276

XVII. Of the Burning Love and great Affection that we should have to receive our Saviour Christ Jesu . 278

XVIII. That a Man should not be too Curious an Inquisitor of that Holy Sacrament, but a Meek Follower of Christ Jesu in submitting his Reason and Feeling to the Holy Faith 281

IMITATION OF CHRIST

PART I

CHAPTER I

OF FOLLOWING OF CHRIST AND DESPISING OF ALL WORLDLY VANITIES

Our Lord saith: he that followeth me goeth not in darkness

These are the words of Christ in the which we are admonished to follow his life and his manners if we would be verily illumined and be delivered from all manner of blindness of heart

Wherefore let our sovereign study be—in the life of Jesu Christ.

The teaching of Christ passeth the teaching of all saints and holy men; and he that hath the spirit of Christ should find there hidden manna.

But it happeneth that many feel but little desire of often hearing of the gospel; for they have not the spirit of Christ;

For whoever will understand the words of Christ plainly and in their savour must study to conform all his life to his life.

What availeth thee to dispute highly of the Trinity if thou lack meekness and thereby thou displeasest the Trinity?

For high words make not a man holy and righteous, but it is virtuous life that maketh man dear to God.

I desire rather to know compunction than its definition.

If thou knewest all the Bible without book and the sayings of all the philosophers, what should that avail thee without charity and grace?

All other things in the world, save only to love God and serve him, are vanity of vanities and all vanity.

This is sovereign wisdom by despising of the world for a man to draw him nearer to the realm of heaven: but for a man to seek perishing riches and to trust in them is vanity.

And it is vanity also to desire honour and for a man to lift himself on high

And it is vanity to follow the desires of the flesh and to desire the thing for which man must afterward grievously be punished

And it is vanity to desire a long life and to take no heed of a good life

And it is vanity for a man to take heed only to this present life and not to see before those things that are to come

And it is vanity to love the thing that passeth away with all manner of swiftness and not to hasten thither where joy abideth everlasting.

Have mind often of that proverb that the eye is not fulfilled with seeing nor the ear with hearing.

Study therefore to withdraw thy heart from love of things visible and turn thee to things invisible

For they that follow their senses spot their conscience and lose the grace of God.

CHAPTER II

OF MEEK KNOWING OF A MAN'S SELF

EVERY man naturally desireth to have knowledge: but knowledge without the grace and dread of God, what availeth it?

Certainly the meek plough man that serveth God is much better than the proud philosopher that, taking no heed of his own living, considereth the courses of the heavens.

He that knoweth himself well is vile in his own sight and hath no delight in man's praises.

If I knew all things that are in the world and be not in charity what should that help me before God who shall doom me according to my deeds?

Cease from over-great desire of knowledge, for therein shall be found great distraction and deceit.

They that are learned will gladly be seen and held wise and many things there be whose knowledge availeth the soul little or naught. And full unwise is he that more attendeth to other things than to the health of his soul.

Many words fill not the soul but a good life refresheth the mind and a pure conscience giveth a great confidence in God.

The more thou canst do and the better that thou canst do, the more grievously thou shalt be doomed unless thou live the more holily. Be not lift up

therefore for any skill or any knowledge but rather dread for the knowledge that is given thee.

If it seemeth to thee that thou knowest many things and art understanding enough, yet are there many more things that thou knowest not.

Think not highly of thyself but rather acknowledge thine ignorance.

Why wilt thou prefer thyself before any other since many other are found better learned and more wise in the law of God than thou?

If thou wilt learn and know any thing profitably love to be unknown and to be accounted as naught.

This is the highest and most profitable reading, the very knowing and despising of a man's self. For a man to account nothing of himself but evermore to think well and highly of other folks is sovereign wisdom and perfection.

If thou see any man sin openly or do grievous sins thou oughtest not to deem thyself better; for thou knowest not how long thou mayest abide in good.

All we be frail but thou shalt hold no man frailer than thyself.

CHAPTER III

OF THE TEACHING OF TRUTH

Blissful is he whom truth herself teacheth not by figures or voices but as it is.

Our opinions and our feeling ofttimes deceive us and see but little.

What availeth great searching of dark and hidden things for the which we shall not be blamed in the judgment though we know them not?

A great unwisdom it is that we, setting at naught profitable and necessary things, give our utmost attention to curious and harmful things. We, having eyes, see not.

And why care we of general kinds and special kinds? (genera and species)

He to whom the word everlasting speaketh is sped and delivered from a multitude of opinions. Of one word came all things, and all things speak one word; that is the beginning that speaketh to us. No man without him understandeth or judgeth righteously

He to whom all things are one and who draweth all things to one and seeth all things in one may be stable in heart and peaceably abide in God.

O God of truth make me one with thee in everlasting love.

Ofttimes it wearieth me to hear and read many things: in thee Lord is all that I will and desire.

All manner of teachers hold they their peace and all manner of creatures keep they their silence in thy sight: speak thou to me alone.

The more that a man is inwardly at one with thee alone the more things and the higher doth he understand, for he taketh his light of understanding from above.

A pure simple and a stable spirit is not distracted with many works for he worketh all things to the honour of God and laboureth to be idle in himself from all manner of inquiry with his own knowledge.

What hindereth thee more and troubleth thee more than thine unmortified affection of heart?

A good and a devout man first disposeth his works inwardly which he proposeth to do outwardly. Nor do these works draw him to desires of vicious inclination but rather he boweth them to the judgment of right reason.

Who hath a stronger battle than he that useth force to overcome himself? and that should be our occupation, for a man to overcome himself and every day to be stronger than himself somewhat to do better.

All manner of perfection in this world hath a manner of imperfection annexed thereto and our speculation is not without darkness on some side.

Meek knowing of thyself is more acceptable to God than deep inquiry after knowing.

Knowledge or bare and simple knowing of things is not to be blamed, the which, in itself considered,

is good and ordained of God: but a good conscience and a virtuous life is ever to be preferred.

And forasmuch as many people study more to have knowledge than to live well therefore ofttimes they err and bring forth little fruit or none.

O if men would give so great diligence to root out vices and to plant virtues as they do to move questions there would not be so much wickedness in the people nor so much laxity in cenobies (convents) and monasteries.

Certainly at the day of doom it shall not be asked of us what we have read but what we have done: nor what good we have said but how religiously we have lived.

Tell me now where are the lords and masters that thou knewest sometime while they lived and flourished in the schools? Now other men have their prebends and I wot not whether they once think upon them. In their lives they appeared somewhat and now almost no man speaketh of them. O Lord how soon passeth the glory of this world.

Would God that their life had been according to their knowledge for then they had well studied and well read.

How many be there that perish in this world by vain knowledge and little reck of the service of God. And for that they choose rather to be great than meek therefore they vanish away in their own thoughts.

Verily he is great that in himself is little and meek and setteth at naught all height of honour. Verily he

is great that hath great charity. Verily he is prudent that deemeth all earthly things as stinking dung so that he may win Christ. And he is verily well learned that doth the will of God and forsaketh his own.

CHAPTER IV

OF PRUDENCE IN MAN'S WORKS

It is not fit to give credence to every word nor to every stirring (suggestion), but every thing is to be weighed according to God warily and in leisure.

Alas, evil of another man is rather believed than good; we are so weak.

But the perfect believe not lightly all things that men tell, for they know man's infirmity ready to speak evil and sliding enough in words.

Hereto it belongeth also not to believe every man's words nor to tell other men that that we hear or lightly believe.

Have thy counsel with a wise man and a man of conscience and seek rather to be taught of thy better than to follow thine own inventions.

Good life maketh a man wise in God's sight and expert in many things.

The more meek that a man is and the more subject to God the more wise shall he be in all things,—and the more patient.

CHAPTER V

OF READING OF THE SCRIPTURES

TRUTH is to be sought in holy writings, not in eloquence. Every holy writing ought to be read with the same spirit wherewith it was made.

We ought in Scriptures rather to seek profitableness than highness of language.

We ought as gladly to read simple and devout books as high books and profound sentences.

Let not the authority of him that writeth whether he be of great name or little change thy thought, but let the love of pure truth draw thee to the love of God.

Ask not who said this but take heed what is said. Man passeth but the truth of our Lord abideth everlastingly.

God speaketh to us in diverse wise without acceptance of persons.

Our curiosity oft times in reading of the scriptures deceiveth us in that we search for curious thought where it is to be passed over simply and not curiously enquired.

If thou wilt draw profit in reading read meekly simply and truly, not desiring to have a name of knowledge.

Ask gladly, and hear, holding thy peace.

And let not the parables of elder men displease thee for they are not brought forth without cause

CHAPTER VI

OF INORDINATE AFFECTIONS

WHENEVER a man coveteth anything inordinately anon he is unrested in himself.

The proud man and covetous hath never rest: the poor man and meek in spirit is delighted in multitude of peace.

The man that is not perfectly dead in himself is soon tempted and soon overcome in small things and things of little price.

He that is feeble in spirit and yet in fleshly manner inclined to sensual things can not lightly withdraw himself wholly from earthly desires: wherefore ofttimes when he withdraweth a little he is sorry; and when any man withstandeth his will he disdaineth him

And if he obtain that he desireth anon he is grieved in his conscience that he hath followed his own passion, the which helpeth nothing to the peace that he sought. Wherefore in withstanding of passions and not in serving them standeth very peace of heart.

Wherefore then is no peace in the heart of the fleshly man nor in him that is all given to outward things, but in the fervent spiritual man.

CHAPTER VII

OF FLEEING FROM VAIN HOPE AND ELATION

He is vain that putteth his hope in men or in creatures.

Be not ashamed to serve other men for the love of Jesu Christ and to be seen poor in this world. Stand not upon thyself but set thy trust in God. Do that in thee is and God shall be nigh to thy good will.

Trust not in thine own knowledge nor in the wiliness of any man living: but rather in the grace of God that helpeth meek folk and maketh low them that presume of themselves.

Rejoice thee not in riches if thou have any nor in friends if they be mighty: but in God that giveth all things and above all things desireth to give himself.

Lift not up thyself for greatness nor for beauty of body the which is corrupt and defouled with a little sickness.

Please not thyself for ability or for wit lest thou displease God of whom cometh all the good that thou hast naturally.

Account not thyself better than other lest peradventure thou be held worse in the sight of God that knoweth what is in man.

Be not proud of good works; for God's judgments are thiswise and man's otherwise; for ofttimes what pleaseth man displeaseth God.

If thou have any good things believe better things of others that thou may keep thy meekness.

It shall not annoy thee if thou set thee under all men: it might hinder thee much if thou set thyself afore other.

Continual peace is with the meek man but in the heart of the proud man is oft envy and indignation.

CHAPTER VIII

OF ESCHEWING OF TOO GREAT FAMILIARITY

Show not thy heart to every man but bring thy cause to him that is wise and dreadeth God.

Be rarely among young people and strange folks.

Blandish not rich men and appear not before great men: but accompany thyself with meek and simple men and treat of such things as belong to edification.

Be not familiar to any woman but generally commend all good women to God.

Desire to be familiar with God and with his angels and eschew knowledge of men. Charity is to be had towards all men but familiarity is not expedient.

It happeneth some times that a person unknown shineth by his bright fame whose presence offendeth and maketh dark the eyes of the beholders. We often hope to please others by our being and living together with them and often we begin to displease through ungodly manners found in us.

CHAPTER IX

OF OBEDIENCE AND SUBJECTION

It is a right great thing for a man to stand under obedience and live under a prelate and not to be at his own liberty; it is much more sure (safe) to stand in subjection than in prelacy.

Many are under obedience more of necessity than of charity: and they have pain and soon and lightly grutch (grumble) and shall never get liberty of mind till they with all their heart subdue themselves for God.

Run here and there, thou shalt never find quiet but in meek subjection under a prelate; imagination and changing of place have deceived many a one.

True is it that every man after his own wit is inclined most to them that feel as he doth: but if God be among us it is needful for us some times to forsake our own feelings for the good of peace.

Who is so wise that may fully know all things? Wherefore trust not too much in thine own feeling but desire gladly to hear other men's feelings. If thy feeling be good and thou, for God, leavest that and followest another man's feeling thou shalt more profit thereby.

I have heard ofttimes that it is more sure (safe) to hear and to take counsel than to give counsel

It may well be that every man feel well (*i.e.*, have good thoughts): but for a man no wise to agree with other men when reason and the matter require it is token of pride and obstinacy.

CHAPTER X

OF ESCHEWING SUPERFLUITY OF WORDS

ESCHEW thou noise and the press of men as much as thou mayest: for treating and talking of secular deeds though they be brought forth with true and simple intention, hindereth much: for we be soon defiled and led into vanity.

I have wished myself ofttimes to have held my peace and not to have been among men; but why speak we and talk we together so gladly since seldom we come home without hurting of conscience?

Therefore we talk so oft together because by such speaking we seek comfort each from the other and to relieve the heart that is made weary with divers thoughts: and we speak much of such things as we love or desire or such things as are contrary to us: but, alas, ofttimes very vainly and unfruitfully. For such outward comfort is a great hindering of inward and heavenly consolation and therefore we ought to wake and to pray that our time pass not idly.

If it be lawful and expedient to speak, speak of such things as belong to edification. Evil use and the taking no heed of our ghostly (spiritual) increase and profiting doth much towards the evil keeping of our mouths. Nevertheless devout conference on spiritual things, and that where men of one soul and one spirit are fellowshipped together in God, helpeth greatly to spiritual profiting.

CHAPTER XI

OF PEACE TO BE GOTTEN AND ZEAL FOR PROFITING

We should have much peace if we were not occupied with other men's deeds and sayings that belong not to our care. How may he long abide in peace that meddleth himself with other men's cares, that seeketh occasions outward and seldom gathereth himself within himself?

Blissful are the simple for they shall have much peace.

Why were some holy men sometime so perfect and so contemplative but that they studied to mortify themselves in all wise from earthly desires? And therefore they could take heed to themselves and cleave to God with all the inward of their hearts

But we are occupied with our own passions and are busied overmuch in transitory things.

Also seldom it is that we overcome any vice perfectly: and we tend not every day to increase and therefore we abide cold and luke (lukewarm).

If we were perfectly dead to ourselves and not entangled too much with outward things then might we taste godly things and somewhat know of heavenly contemplation.

The whole and the greatest impediment is that we are not free from passions and concupiscences, nor do we force ourselves to enter in the way of holy men and saints.

Also when there cometh a little adversity we be anon thrown down and we turn us to seek man's comfort.

If we would force ourselves to stand in battle as mighty men we should see verily the help of our Lord come from heaven: for he is ready to help all them that fight for him and trust in his grace, and suffereth us to have occasions of fighting that we may have the victory.

If we put profiting of religion in outward observances alone our devotion shall soon have an end; but let us set the axe to the root that we, purged of our passions, may have a peaceable mind.

If every year we destroyed groundly (utterly) one vice we should soon be perfect men; but ofttimes we feel the contrary; for we find ourselves better and purer in the beginning of our conversion than after many years of our profession. Our fervour and our profiting ought to increase daily but now it seemeth a great thing if we may have but a part of our first fervour.

If we would in the beginning put (use) a little violence we should be able to do all things afterward with easiness and gladness

It is grievous to leave things accustomed and it is more grievous for a man to do against his own will; but if thou overcome not small and light things when shalt thou overcome harder things?

Withstand thine inclination and unlearn evil custom lest little and little it bring thee to greater difficulty.

O if thou wouldst take heed how much peace thou shouldst get to thyself and how much gladness thou shouldst cause to other men in keeping thyself well, I suppose that thou wouldst be more busy about spiritual profiting.

CHAPTER XII

OF THE PROFIT OF ADVERSITY

It is good to us that we have some time grievances and contrarieties: for ofttimes they call a man into himself that he may know himself to be in an exile and that he may put not his trust in any earthly thing.

It is good that some time we suffer gainsaying and that men think of us evil and imperfectly; yea, though we do well and mean well.

Such things help ofttimes to meekness and defend us from vainglory: for then we seek better the inward witness, God, when we be little set by outwardly of men and little credence is given to us

Therefore a man ought to firm (strengthen) himself in God so that he needeth not to seek any consolations outwardly

When a man well disposed is troubled tempted or vexed with evil thoughts then he understandeth God to be more necessary unto him without whom he perceiveth that he may do no good thing; then he mourneth, then he waileth, and then he prayeth because of the miseries that he suffereth. Then also it wearieth him to live any longer: he desireth death that he may be dissolved and be with Christ.

Then also he perceiveth certainly that perfect surety and full peace may not be had in this world.

CHAPTER XIII

OF WITHSTANDING OF TEMPTATION

All the while we are in this world we may not be without tribulation and temptation; as it is written in Job "Temptation is man's life on earth." And therefore every man ought to be busy about his temptations and to wake (watch) in prayers, that the enemy find no place to deceive thee for he sleepeth never but goeth about seeking whom he may devour.

There is no man so perfect nor so holy but that some time he hath temptations and we may not fully lack them.

Nevertheless temptations are ofttimes right profitable to men, though they be heavy and grievous; for in them a man is meekened (humbled), purged and sharply taught

All holy men have gone and profited by many tribulations and temptations: and they that could not well suffer temptation were made reprobate and they failed in their way.

Neither is no order so holy nor no place so sure and secret but there be temptations or adversities there.

There is no man all sure from temptations while he liveth; for in ourself is that whereof we be tempted since we are born in concupiscence.

When one tribulation or temptation goeth another cometh and ever shall we have somewhat to suffer for we have lost the good of felicity.

Many men seek to overcome temptations only by fleeing of them and they fall much more grievously into them. By only fleeing we may not overcome, but by patience and meekness we shall be stronger than all our enemies.

He that only outwardly declineth from temptation and taketh it not up by the root shall little profit: but rather temptations shall come upon him again and he shall feel worse and worse.

Thou shalt overcome them better little and little by patience and long-suffering with the help of God than with hardness and thine own importunity.

In temptation ofttimes ask counsel.

Be not hard to him that is tempted, but give him comfort as thou wouldest should be done to thee

The beginning of all temptations is inconstancy of heart and little trust in God; for as a ship without governance is stirred hitherward and thitherward with the waves so a man that is remiss and that holdeth not stedfastly his purpose is diversely tempted.

Fire proveth gold and temptation proveth the righteous man.

Ofttimes we wot never what lieth in our power to do but temptation openeth what we be.

Nevertheless we ought to watch principally about the beginning for then is the enemy soonest overcome if he be not suffered to enter unto the door of the mind; but anon, as he knocketh, meet him at entry.

First there cometh to mind a simple thought, after that a strong imagination and then delectation and a shrewd moving—and assenting.

So the wicked enemy while he is not withstood in the beginning entereth in little and little till he be all in; and the longer a man tarrieth in withstanding the more feeble he waxeth continually and his enemy against him is more mighty.

Some men have most grievous temptations in the beginning of their conversion, some in the end: some in all their life have no ease.

Many men are tempted full easily after the wisdom and equity of the ordinance of God that peiseth (weigheth) the states and merits of men and ordaineth all things to the help of his chosen children.

Wherefore we ought not to despair when we be tempted but the more fervently pray God that he vouchsafe to help us in every tribulation; for he, as Saint Paul saith, shall make in tribulation such profiting that we shall suffer it and abide it.

Wherefore let us bow our souls under the mighty hand of God in every tribulation and temptation; for them that are meek in spirit he shall save and enhance.

In temptations and tribulations it is proved how much a man profiteth and *there* is most merit and virtue is best shown.

It is no great thing if a man be devout and fervent if he feel no heaviness but if he suffer patiently in time of adversity there is hope of great profiting.

Some men are preserved from great temptations and in small ones are daily overcome; that so, humbled, they may trust never in themselves in great things who are found feeble in so little things.

CHAPTER XIV

OF FLEEING RASH JUDGMENT

TURN thine eyes to thyself and be not a judge of other men's deeds

In judging other men a man laboureth in vain, ofttimes erreth and lightly sinneth: but in judging and discussing a man's self ever he laboureth fruitfully.

As it lieth in our heart so for the most part we judge and lightly we lose our true judgment for our own likings.

If God were always the true intention of our desire we should not easily be troubled at the withstanding of our opinions; but ofttimes something is hidden within or cometh from without that draweth our judgment (aside).

Many privily seek their own advantage in things that they judge and yet they know it not.

It seemeth also to them that all is well when all things fall after their own rule and their own feelings; and if it fall otherwise than they desire then they are soon moved and sorry.

From diversity of opinions and of wits ofttimes come dissensions between friends and neighbours, between religious and devout people.

Old custom is hard to break and scarce any man will be led otherwise than seemeth good unto himself.

If thou lean more on thine own reason than on the

humbling virtue of Jesu Christ it will be late before thou be a man illuminate; for God will have us perfectly subject unto him and by love brightened and burning will have us pass by the reason of all manner of men.

CHAPTER XV

OF WORKS DONE IN CHARITY

Evil is not to be done for nothing in this world nor for man's love. For the profit of him that is needy a good work may sometimes be left or else changed for the better: for in this manner the good work is not destroyed but changed.

Without charity the outward work availeth naught; but whatever is done of charity, be it never so simple nor so little, all is fruitful For God weigheth more with how great charity a man doth a work than how great a work he doth.

He that loveth much doth much; and he doth much that doth a thing well.

He doth well that serveth more the common weal than his own weal.

Ofttimes it seemeth to be charity and it is carnality: for carnal inclination, ones own will, hope of reward, affection for profit are but seldom out of the way but ever ready.

He that hath very and perfect charity seeketh himself in nothing but only desireth the glory of God in all things and above all things. Also he hath envy to no man for he loveth no private or personal joy; nor he will not joy in himself but above all things he desireth to be made blissful in God.

He ascribeth to no man any good thing but wholly referreth all things to God of whom they proceed originally in whom all saints rest finally.

O he that had verily that knowledge of charity would truly feel that all earthly things are full of vanity.

CHAPTER XVI

OF BEARING OTHER MEN'S INFIRMITIES AND FAULTS

Such things as a man may not amend in himself and in others he ought to suffer patiently till God ordain the contrary.

Think peradventure that it is better for thee to suffer such contrarieties for thy proving and thy patience; without which our merits are of little price. Nevertheless thou oughtest for such impediments to pray meekly to God that he vouchsafe to help thee that thou mayest suffer benignly

If any such there be that be once or twice admonished and will not agree nor be counselled strive not with him but commit all to God that his will and his worship may be done and had in all his servants—he can well turn evil into good.

Study to be patient in suffering and bearing other men's faults and all manner infirmities: for thou hast in thee many things that must be suffered by other men. If thou canst not make thyself such as thou wouldest how canst thou have another at thy pleasure? Gladly we desire to make other men perfect but we will not amend our own fault; we will that other men be straightly corrected and we ourselves will not be corrected. Other men's large licence displeaseth us but we to ourselves will have nothing denied that we ask. We will have

others restrained by statutes and we will suffer ourselves in no wise to be more restrained.

And thus it appeareth how seldom we weigh our neighbour as ourselves.

If all men were perfect what should we then have to suffer from other men for God's sake? Now therefore God hath ordained that we should learn each to bear others burdens. For there is no man without fault, no man without a burden, no man sufficient to himself, no man wise enough to himself but we must bear together, comfort together, help together, teach and admonish together.

What every man truly is is best shown by occasion of adversity: for occasions make not a man faii but they show what the man is.

CHAPTER XVII

OF THE RELIGIOUS LIFE

It behoveth that thou learn to break thyself in many things if thou wilt accord and keep peace with others.

It is no little thing for a man to dwell in monasteries and congregations and there to live without quarrel and so truly to abide to his life's end. Blissful is he that liveth there well and graciously continueth.

If thou wilt stand rightly and wilt profit account thyself to be an exile and a pilgrim upon earth.

It behoveth thee to be a fool for Christ.

If thou wilt lead a religious life habit and tonsure avail little: but change of manners and whole mortification of the passions make a true religious man.

He that seeketh other than God to the health of his soul he shall find but tribulation and sorrow: nor may he long stand in peace unless he enforce himself to be least and subject to all.

Thou comest to serve and not to govern: know well that thou art called to suffer and to labour and not to be idle and tell tales.

Here are men proved as gold in the furnace: here may no man stand unless he will meeken (humble) himself with all his heart for God.

CHAPTER XVIII

OF THE EXAMPLES OF THE HOLY FATHERS

Behold the living examples of the old fathers in the which shineth true perfection and thou shalt see how little it is and almost naught that we do. Alas, what is our life compared to them?

Holy men and the friends of God have served our Lord in hunger and in thirst, in cold and nakedness, in labour and weariness, in wakings and fastings, in prayers and holy meditations, in persecutions and many reproofs. O how many and how grievous tribulations apostles suffered, martyrs, confessors, virgins, and all Religious that would follow the steps of Christ: for they hated their souls that is to say their bodily lives that they might keep them into life everlasting

O how strict a life lived the holy fathers in the desert; how long and how grievous temptations suffered they: how oft were they vexed by the enemy: how continual and how fervent prayers offered they to God: how sharp their abstinences; how great zeal and fervour had they to spiritual profiting: how great battle kept they about destruction of vices; how pure and right intention was theirs towards God.

By day they laboured and by night they gave themselves to prayer, though even in labouring they ceased

not from inward prayer; every time they spent fruitfully, every hour given to thought of God seemed short and for the great sweetness of their contemplation sometimes the necessity of bodily food was forgotten.

They renounced all manner of riches, dignity, honours, friends and kin: they cared to have naught from the world, scarce they took what was necessary for life and were sorry to have to serve the body in its necessity. They were poor in earthly things but right rich in grace and virtues. Outwardly they were needy but inwardly they were refreshed with grace and ghostly comfort.

To the world they were aliens but to God they were familiar friends. To themselves they seemed as naught and despised by the world but in the eyes of God they seemed precious and chosen.

They stood in true meekness, they lived in simple obedience, they walked in charity and patience: and therefore every day they profited in spirit and gat great grace in the eyes of God.

They were given as an example to all Religious men and these ought to provoke us more to live and profit well than the great number of sluggish and lukewarm men to make us remiss and lax.

O how great was the fervour of religion in the beginning of its institution

O how great devotion in praise, how great zeal for following virtue, how great discipline throve during that time: how great reverence and obedience under a rule flourished in them all.

Witness yet their steps that are left to show that they

were truly holy men and perfect men who fighting so doughtily threw the world under foot.

Now is he accounted great that is not a breaker of the rule, that can suffer patiently what happeneth to him. O the sluggishness and the negligence of our time, that we so soon decline from our earlier fervour and are weary to live for very sluggishness and weariness.

Would God that the profiting of virtue sleep not utterly in thee that hast seen so many examples of devout men.

CHAPTER XIX

OF THE EXERCISES OF A GOOD RELIGIOUS MAN

THE life of a good Religious man ought to shine in all manner of virtue so that he be such inward as he appeareth to men outward. And rightly it ought to be much more inward than that which is seen outward. For God is our beholder whom chiefly we ought to worship wherever we be and go clean in his sight as angels.

Every day we ought to renew our purpose and stir ourselves to fervour as though we had been first converted and say 'Help me, Lord God, in my good purpose and in thy service and grant me this day to begin perfectly; for naught it is that I have done unto this time."

According to our purpose so is the course of our profiting, and he that will profit well hath need of great diligence: for if he that purposeth seriously faileth ofttimes what shall hap to him that seldom or never purposeth anything seriously?

Nevertheless in divers manners it happeneth that men forsake their purpose; and though it appear to be slight yet it is not without some manner of hindering.

The purpose of righteous men hangeth rather in the grace of God than in man's own wisdom; in him they trust always in all things that they do.

For man purposeth and God disposeth; and man's way is not in man (to carry out).

If an accustomed exercise be sometimes left because of pity or for the profit of our neighbour it may soon be recovered again: but if it be lightly forsaken through heaviness of soul or negligence it is blameworthy and will be found hurtful.

Let us enforce ourselves as much as we can and yet we shall lightly fail in many things. But ever more somewhat certain is to be purposed and especially against those things that most hinder us.

Our outward and our inward exercises both ought to be searched and kept in order for both are expedient and helping to ghostly profit.

If thou may not continually gather thyself together, do it some time at least once a day, morning or evening.

In the morning purpose, in the eventide discuss the manner, what thou hast been this day in word, work and thought: for in these peradventure thou hast oft offended thy God and thy neighbour.

Gird thee as a man against the Fiend's wickedness.

Refrain from gluttony and thou shalt the more easily restrain all the inclination of the flesh.

Be never all idle, but either be reading or writing or praying or thinking or something labouring for the common profit.

Bodily exercises are to be done discreetly; not to be taken evenly and alike by all men.

Those things that are not common to all are not to be shown outwardly, for private things are more safely exercised in secret wise.

Nevertheless be ware that thou be not slow in common things and more ready for private and singular

exercises; but, these that are due and enjoined being truly fulfilled, if there be vacant time, yield thee to thyself as devotion desireth.

All must not have one manner of exercise, but one this, another that, as according.

Also diversity of exercises pleaseth, for some are more savoury on festival days and some on common days; others we need in time of temptation, others in time of peace and quietness: others we must think when we are sorry and others when we are glad in our Lord.

In principal feasts good exercises ought to be renewed and the help of the saints more fervently to be sought

From feast to feast we ought to purpose as though we should at that time pass out of this world and go to the feast everlasting

Therefore we ought to array ourselves more busily in devout works and live the more devoutly and keep every observance the more strictly as men that shall soon receive the reward of our labour. And if it be delayed let us account ourselves as men not fully ready and unworthy to come to so great a glory the which shall be revealed in us in time ordained and let us study to make us ready to go out of the world

"Blissful is that servant" saith Luke "whom our Lord when he cometh findeth waking; for I say to you verily he shall set him over all his goods"

CHAPTER XX

OF LOVE OF SILENCE AND TO BE ALONE

SEEK a convenient time to take heed to thyself and think ofttimes of the benefits of God.

Leave curious things and read such matters that rather give compunction than occupation.

If thou withdraw thyself from void speakings and idle circuits and from vanities and hearing of tidings thou shalt find time sufficient and convenient to have sweet meditations.

The great holy men where they might, fled men's fellowship and chose to live to God in secret places

One said " as ofttimes as I was among men I came back a less man " that is to say less holy: this we find by experience when we talk any while.

It is easier for a man always to be still than not to exceed in words. It is easier for a man to abide privily at home than well to keep himself being away from home.

Wherefore whoever purposeth to come to inward and to spiritual things it behoveth him to decline from the company of people—with Jesu.

No man appeareth safely away from home but he that loveth gladly to abide at home.

No man speaketh safely but he that is glad to hold his peace.

No man is safe above but he that will gladly be beneath.

No man commandeth safely but he that hath learned to obey.

No man rejoiceth safely but he that hath the witness of a good conscience.

Nevertheless the safety of holy men was never without dread of God; nor were they the less busy and meek in themselves though they had great virtues and grace.

The safety of shrews (wicked men) groweth from pride and presumption and in the end it turneth into deceit.

Promise thyself safety in this world never, though thou seem a good religious man or a devout hermit: Ofttimes they that are best in man's estimation fall most perilously for their trust in themselves.

Wherefore it is not profitable that they lack temptations utterly but they should ofttimes be attacked lest they be too secure and lest they be lift up by pride and lightly decline to outer consolations.

O he that never sought transitory gladness, he that never occupied him in the world, how good a conscience would he keep.

O he that would cut away all manner of vain business and would think all only on ghostly and godly things and set all his hope in God how great peace and quiet should he have.

There is no man worthy heavenly comfort unless he diligently exercise himself in holy compunction. If thou heartily be sorry enter into thy closet, exclude all worldly noise as it is written "Be ye sorry in your chambers"; thou shalt find there what outside thou shalt ofttimes lose.

The cell well continued waxeth sweet and the cell evil kept engendreth weariness. If in the beginning of thy conversion thou keep thy cell and dwell well therein it shall be to thee afterwards as a dear and well beloved friend and most pleasant solace.

In silence and quiet the devout soul profiteth and learneth the secrets of the scriptures: there he findeth the floods of tears wherewith every night he may wash and cleanse himself that he may be the more familiar to his creator the more he withdraweth him far from secular noise.

He that withdraweth himself from friends and known men, God shall come nigh unto him with his holy angels.

Better it is for a man to be hid and take care of himself than, taking no heed of himself, to work wonders.

It is commendable for a man of religion seldom to go out, to fly from being seen and not wish to see men; why wilt thou see what is not lawful for thee to have?

The world passeth and his concupiscence.

The desires of sensuality draw men to walk about; but when the hour is past what cometh thereof but grudging (murmuring) of conscience and dispersion of heart?

A glad going out ofttimes bringeth forth a sorrowful coming home and a glad watching over evening bringeth forth a sorry morning; so every fleshly joy entereth in pleasantly but in the end he biteth and slayeth.

What canst thou see elsewhere that thou canst not see

here? Lo here heaven earth and all elements and of these all things are made.

What canst thou see elsewhere that may long abide under the sun? peradventure thou waitest to be filled; but thou shalt never come thereto.

If thou sawest all things that are present what were that but a vain sight? Lift up thine eyes to God on high and pray God for thy sins and negligence: leave vain things to the vain and take thou heed to the things that God commandeth thee.

Shut thy door upon thee and call to thee Jesu thy love: dwell with him in thy cell for thou shalt not find elsewhere so great peace.

If thou hadst not gone out nor heard no tidings thou wouldst the better have abided in peace; and since it delighteth thee sometimes to hear new tidings it behoveth, following this, that thou suffer turbation of heart.

CHAPTER XXI

OF COMPUNCTION OF HEART

If thou wilt any wise profit keep thee in the dread of God and be not in great liberty but refrain thy understanding under discipline and give not thyself to unseasonable gladness.

Give thyself to compunction of heart and thou shalt find devotion; compunction openeth many things which distraction of mind soon loseth.

Wonder it is that a man may at any time be glad that considereth his exile and so many perils of his soul. For through lightness of heart and negligence of our faults we feel not the sorrows and the harm done to our souls and ofttimes we laugh vainly when we should by reason rather weep.

There is no true liberty nor good mirth but in the dread of God with a good conscience; blissful is he that may put away every hindering distraction and bring himself to the unity of holy compunction: blissful is he that voideth from him all that may defoul or grieve his conscience.

Fight manly: custom is overcome with custom.

If thou canst leave men, they will well leave thee and suffer thee to do thine own deeds.

Draw not to thyself the matters of other men and implicate not thyself in causes of great men. Have thine eye first upon thyself and admonish thyself

spiritually before all others whom thou lovest best.

If thou have not the favour of men be not sorry therefore: but let this be grievous to thee that thou hast (keepest) not thyself well and circumspectly as it beseemeth the servant of God and a devout religious man to live.

Ofttimes it is more profitable and more safe that a man have not many comforts in this life and specially after the flesh.

And that we have not or that we seldom feel godly consolations it is own our fault; for we seek not compunction, nor we put not away utterly vain and outward comforts.

Acknowledge thyself to be not worthy godly consolation but rather worthy much tribulation.

When a man is perfectly sorry then is all the world grievous and bitter to him.

A good man findeth sufficient matter of sorrowing and weeping; whether he consider himself or think on his neighbour he shall know that no man liveth here without tribulation; and the more strictly that he considereth himself so much more he sorroweth.

Matters of righteous sorrow and of inward compunction are our sins and our vices wherein we lie wrapped so that we may but seldom behold heavenly things.

If thou thoughtest ofter on death than thou dost of long life no doubt but thou wouldst more fervently amend thyself: or else if thou wouldst heartily behold the pains of hell and purgatory I believe that thou wouldst gladly suffer pain, labour and

LIBRARY COLLEGE 10343

sorrow, dreading no manner of rigour: but because these go not to the heart and we yet love blandishings, therefore we remain cold and slow.

Ofttimes it is need (poverty) of spirit whereof the wretched body so easily complaineth: pray therefore meekly to our Lord that he give thee the spirit of compunction and say with the prophet "Feed me, Lord, with the bread of tears and give me drink of tears in measure."

CHAPTER XXII

OF CONSIDERATION OF MAN'S MISERY

WRETCHED thou art wherever thou be and whithersoever thou turn thee unless thou turn thee to God.

Why art thou troubled, that all things come not to thee as thou willest or desirest? who is he that hath all things at his own will? neither I nor you, nor no man in earth; there is no man in this world without some manner of tribulation or anguish, though he be king or pope.

Then who is in the best case? forsooth he that may suffer anything for God's sake.

Lord, now there are many weak folk that say "O how good a life that man hath; how great, how rich, how mighty, how high he is." But behold heavenly goods and thou shalt see that all these temporal goods be as none but that they be full uncertain, and more grieving than easing; for they are never had without business and dread.

It is man's felicity to have temporal goods in abundance but mediocrity sufficeth him; verily it is a misery to live upon earth: the more spiritual that a man will be the more this present life appeareth bitter: for he feeleth better and seeth more clearly the faults of man's corruption.

For to eat, to drink, to wake, to sleep, to rest, to labour, and to be subject to the necessities of nature is

very misery and an affliction to a devout man that would fain be loose and free from sin.

The inward man is full sore grieved with bodily necessities in this world.

Wherefore the prophet prayeth devoutly that he may be free from them saying "Lord, deliver me from my necessities."

But woe to them that know not their misery: but more woe to them that love this misery and this corruptible life; for there be some that so heartily clasp this wretched life that though they may scarce have their necessities with labour, yea and with begging, yet if they might live here for ever, they would take no heed of the realm of heaven.

O the mad men and out of true belief that live so deeply in earthly things that they savour no heavenly things: but these wretches yet in the end shall grievously feel how nought it was and how vile that which they have loved.

But the saints of God and all devout men and friends of Christ have not taken heed to that which pleaseth the flesh nor to them that have flourished in this world: but all their hope and all their intention hath been to things everlasting.

All their desire was borne up to things invisible and abiding lest by love of things visible they might be drawn to their lowest things.

Brother, lose not thy confidence in profiting by spiritual things: yet hast thou time and the hour; why wilt thou tarry thy purpose till to-morrow? Arise and begin anon and say "Now is the time of doing, now is the time of purging, now is the time of amending."

When thou art ill at ease then say "Now is the time of merit." Thou must go through fire and water ere thou come to refreshing.

Unless thou do force to thyself, thou shalt never overcome vice

All the while that we bear this frail body we cannot be without sin, nor live without heaviness and sorrow.

We would gladly have quiet from all misery; but for as much as by sin we lost innocence, we lost also true blissfulness: therefore we must keep patience and abide the mercy of God till this wickedness go away and this mortality be swallowed up by life

O how great is man's frailty that is prone and ready to vices; this day thou art shriven of thy sins and to-morrow thou dost like sins again. Now thou purposest to be ware and within two hours thou dost as though thou hadst never taken such purpose; wherefore we have great cause to humble ourselves and never to feel any great things of ourselves; for we be so frail and so unstable.

Also may soon be lost by negligence what is scarce gotten in great time by grace.

What shall happen to us in the end that are sluggish so early?

Woe be to us who thus wish to decline and rest as though there were peace and safety, since there appeareth yet no step of true holiness in our conversation.

It were need that we should now be informed as young novices are in good manners, if peradventure there might be any hope of amendment to come or of more spiritual profiting.

CHAPTER XXIII

OF MEDITATION OF DEATH

THIS day a man is and to-morrow he appeareth not: full soon shall this be fulfilled in thee; look whether thou canst do otherwise.

And when man is out of sight soon he passeth out of mind.

O the dulness and the hardness of man's heart that only thinketh on things present and provideth not more for things to come. Thou shouldst have thyself so in every deed and in every thought as though thou shouldst die anon.

If thou hadst a good conscience thou wouldst not much dread death.

It is better to eschew sins than to flee death: if thou be not ready to-day, how shalt thou be ready to-morrow? The morrow is a day uncertain and how knowest thou that thou shalt live to-morrow?

What availeth it to live long when there is little amendment? A long life amendeth us not always but some times increaseth sin. Would God we had lived well in this world one day.

Many men count the years of their conversion but oft-times little is the fruit of amendment. If it be dreadful to die peradventure it is more perilous to live long: blissful is he that hath the hour of his death ever before his eyes and that every day disposeth himself to die.

If thou have seen any man die think that thou thyself shalt go the same way.

When it is morning think thou shalt not come to the even; and when even cometh be not bold to promise thyself the morning.

Wherefore be ever ready and live so that death find thee never unready.

Many men die sudden and unadvised: for what hour we think not the Son of man shall come.

When that last hour cometh thou shalt begin to feel all otherwise of thy life that is past and thou shalt greatly sorrow that thou hast been so remiss and so negligent.

O how blessed is he that laboureth to be such in his life as he desireth to be found in his death.

These things shall give thee great trust in death—perfect contempt of the world, fervent desire to profit in virtues, love of discipline, labour in penance, promptitude in obedience, denying of oneself, bearing all manner of adversity for the love of Christ.

While thou art whole thou mayst do much good: but when thou art sick I wot not what thou mayst do: few there be that are amended by sickness even as they that go much on pilgrimage are but seldom the holier.

Delay not the health of thy soul through trust in friends or in neighbours; for men will forget sooner than thou thinkest: it is better now to make provision betimes and send before thee some good than to trust in other men's help.

If thou be not busy for thyself now, who shall be busy for thee in time to come?

Time now is right precious: but alas that thou spendest it no more profitably wherein thou canst deserve that whereby thou mayst live everlastingly.

Time shall come when thou shalt desire one day or one hour for thine amendment and thou wottest not whether thou shalt get it.

O my dear friend, from how great peril mayst thou make thyself free and from how great dread deliver thyself if thou be now always fearful and suspicious of death.

Study to live so now that thou may in the hour of death rather rejoice than dread: learn now to die to the world that thou mayst begin to live with Christ: learn now to despise all things that thou mayst then go freely to Christ. Chastise thy body by penance that thou mayst then have certain confidence.

And, thou fool, why thinkest thou shalt live long since thou art sure of no day?

How many are deceived and against all expectation drawn out of the body. How often hast thou heard men say "That man was slain with a sword, he drowned, he falling from high brake his neck, he in eating suddenly waxed stiff, he in playing met his end, another with fire, another with iron, another with pestilence, another slain among thieves"

And so the end of all is death and man's life passeth away suddenly as a shadow.

Who shall have mind on thee after death and who shall pray for thee?

Do, my dear brother, now what thou canst do for thou

wottest not when thou shalt die and thou wottest not what shall come to thee after thy death.

While thou hast time gather riches immortal; think on nothing but thy soul's health; charge (care for) only those things that belong to thy soul.

Make thyself friends now worshipping holy saints and following their works that when thou failest in this life they may receive thee into everlasting tabernacles.

Keep thyself as a pilgrim and a guest upon the earth to whom belongeth nothing of worldly business.

Keep thy heart and rear it up to thy God for thou hast here none abiding city: thither direct prayers and daily mournings with tears that thy spirit after thy death may deserve blissfully to come to our Lord.

CHAPTER XXIV

OF THE JUDGMENT AND OF THE PAINS OF SINNERS

In all things behold the end and how thou shalt stand before the righteous judge from whom is nothing hid. He is not pleased with gifts, he receiveth none excusations but that is righteous he shall judge.

O thou most wretched and unsavoury sinner what shalt thou answer God who knows all thy evils, thou that sometimes art afeard of the look of a man that is wroth?

Why dost thou not provide for thyself against the day of doom when no man shall be excused nor defended by another but every man's burden shall be enough for himself?

Now thy labour is fruitful, thy weeping acceptable, thy mourning is heard, thy sorrow is satisfactory and purgatory (purging). He hath a great and a wholesome purgatory that patiently receiveth wrongs, that sorroweth more for other men's malice than for his own wrongs, that gladly prayeth for his adversaries and heartily forgiveth his trespassers, that tarrieth not to ask forgiveness of others, that more easily forgiveth than is wroth, that doth violence to himself, that laboureth in all wise to hold his flesh under the spirit.

Better it is to cut away and purge thy sins and thy vices

here than to reserve them to be purged in coming time.

Verily we deceive ourselves by inordinate love of our flesh.

What other thing shall that fire devour but only thy sins? The more that thou sparest thyself now and followest thy flesh the longer thou shalt be punished and the more matter for burning thou reservest.

In what thing a man hath sinned in those things a man shall be punished.

There slow men shall be pricked with burning pricks and gluttonous men shall be tormented with great hunger and great thirst, the lecherous men and lovers of their lusts shall be poured on with burning pitch and stinking brimstone.

And the envious shall howl for sorrow as mad hounds and there shall be no vice but he shall have his own proper torment.

There proud men shall be fulfilled with all manner of shame and confusion: and covetous men shall be straitened with most wretched need. There shall one hour be more grievous in pain than an hundred year here in laborous penance.

There is no rest, no consolation to damned folk; here some times men cease from labours and are solaced by their friends.

Be now busy and sorrowing for thy sins that thou mayst stand safe in the day of judgment with blissful men.

Then shall righteous men stand in great constancy against them that have anguished them and oppressed them; then shall he sit to judge that now subdueth himself meekly to the judgments

of men; then shall the poor and the meek have great trust and the proud man shall dread on every side.

Then it shall appear that he was wise in this world who learned for Christ to be a fool and despised, then every tribulation suffered patiently for Christ shall please and all wickedness shall stop his mouth; then shall every devout man rejoice and every unreligious man sorrow.

Then shall the flesh that hath been in affliction rejoice much more than he that hath been nourished in delicates.

Then shall the vile coat shine bright and the subtle (woven) cloth shall be dark.

Then shall be more praised a poor cot than a golden palace.

Then shall constant patience more help than all the world's might.

Then shall meek obedience be higher exalted than all worldly wisdom.

Then shall a pure and good conscience gladden a man more than great philosophy.

Then shall contempt of riches weigh more than all the treasure of the earth.

Then shalt thou be more comforted by devout prayer than by delicate eating.

Then shalt thou rather rejoice for well kept silence than for long talking.

Then shall holy works more avail than many fair words.

Then shall straight life and hard penance more avail than all earthly delectation.

Learn now to suffer in a little that thus thou mayst be delivered from more grievous pains.

Prove here first what thou mayst suffer afterwards. If thou canst not suffer here so little things how shalt thou be able to suffer everlasting torments?

If now so little a passion maketh thee impatient, what shall hell do then?

Lo, verily, thou canst not have ij joys; to be delighted in this world and afterward to reign with Christ.

If thou hast lived until now in honours and in the lusts of the world, what could all that avail thee if it happened to thee to die in this moment?

All things therefore are vanity save to love God and to serve him alone. For he that loveth God with all his heart dreadeth neither death, nor torment, nor judgment, nor hell: for perfect love shall make a ready way to God and a sure coming.

He that yet delighteth to sin, it is no wonder that he dread death and the judgment.

Nevertheless it is good that, if love cannot revoke thee from sin, at least let dread do it: for he that putteth behind him the dread of God may not long stand in good but he shall soon run into the Fiend's snares.

CHAPTER XXV

OF THE FERVENT AMENDMENT OF ALL OF A MAN'S LIFE

Be waking and diligent in the service of God and think ofttimes why thou camest here and forsookest the world: was it not that thou wouldest live to God and be a spiritual man?

Wherefore be fervent to profiting for thou shalt receive meed for thy labours and then shall there no more be dread nor sorrow in thy coasts.

Thou shalt labour now a little and thou shalt find great rest and everlasting gladness and if thou abide true and fervent in working without doubt God shall be true and rich in rewarding.

Thou oughtest to keep a good hope that thou shalt come to the victory; but it is not behoveful to make thyself sure lest thou wax sluggish or proud.

There was once a man in great heaviness ofttimes doubting between dread and hope; and on a time, encumbered with great sorrow, he fell down prostrate in his prayers before an altar in the church. This he thought in his mind "Would God I wist that I should persevere." And then he heard within himself an answer from God "What if thou wist, what wouldst thou do? Do now as thou wouldst do then and thou shalt be safe enow"; and anon he was comforted and com-

mitted himself to the will of God and the doubtful fluctuation ceased and he would no more search curiously of things that were to come but rather studied to inquire what was the well pleasing and perfect will of God wherewith to begin every good work and perform it.

" Trust in our Lord and do goodness," saith the Prophet " and dwell upon the earth and thou shalt be fed in the riches thereof."

One thing there is that letteth (hindereth) many men from profiting and fervent amending—horror of difficulty and labour of striving or of fighting. They above all other profit in virtues that enforce themselves most manly to overcome the things that are most grievous and contrary to them: for there a man profiteth and most ample grace deserveth where he overcometh himself and mortifieth in spirit. But all have not alike much to overcome and mortify.

Nevertheless a diligent lover shall be more mighty to profit though he have more passions than he that is well mannered, being less fervent to virtue.

And ij things specially help to great amending: that is for a man to withdraw himself with violence from such things as nature is viciously inclined to and fervently to labour for the good that he most needeth.

Also study most to eschew and overcome those things that most fervently displease thee in other men.

Take thy profiting in every place, so that, if thou hear or see a good ensample, thou be fervent to follow it. If thou think of anything that is to be blamed, be ware that thou do it not. And if thou do it at any

time, study soon to amend it. As thine eye considereth other folk, so other men note thee.

How sweet it is, how merry it is, to see fervent and devout brethren and well mannered and under discipline and how sorrowful and heavy it is to see brethren going inordinately, that practise not those things that they are called to; how noyous (hurtful) it is for a man to take none heed of the purpose of his calling and to bow his wit to such things as are not given him to do.

Have mind on the purpose that thou hast taken and ever put before thee the image of the crucifix. Thou mayest be well ashamed, beholding the life of our Lord Jesu Christ, that thou hast no more studied to conform thee thereto though thou have been long in the way of God. The religious man that attentively and devoutly exerciseth himself in the most holy life and passion of our Lord he shall find abundantly all things that are needful and profitable to him nor shall he have no need to seek any better thing without Jesu.

O if Jesu Christ come into our heart how soon and how sufficiently we should be taught.

The negligent religious and the luke(warm) hath tribulation and on every side suffereth anguish: for he lacketh inward comfort and he is forbidden to seek any outward. The religious man that is without discipline is open to a grievous fall.

He that ever more seeketh those things that are most lax and most remiss shall ever be in anguish; for one thing or other shall evermore displease. How many religious men that are straightened under claustral discipline, live retired, eat poorly, are

clothed boistrously (roughly), labour greatly, speak little, wake long, rise early, pray long, ofttimes read and keep them in all manner of discipline. Take heed of the Carthusians, the Cistercians, and monks and minchins (nuns) of diverse religious houses how they rise up every night to sing to our Lord; therefore it is foul that thou shouldst be sluggish in so holy a work, where so great multitude of religious folk begin to joy to God.

Would God we had naught else to do, but only to praise our Lord Jesu Christ with all our heart.

Would God thou needed never to eat nor drink nor sleep but ever praise God and to take heed to spiritual studies: but thou shouldst be more blissful than now when thou servest the flesh for any manner of need.

Would God that these necessities were not but that only spiritual refections existed for the soul the which alas we taste full seldom.

When a man is come to this that he seeketh his comfort of no creature then at first beginneth God to taste sweet to him perfectly. Then also he is well content of every chance, then he will not be glad for no great thing, nor sorry for no little thing, but putteth himself wholly and trustily in God that is to him all things in all things, to whom nothing perisheth nor dieth but all things live to him and serve him at his beckoning.

Have mind ever on the end and that time lost never cometh again.

Without business and diligence shalt thou never get virtue. If thou beginnest to be luke(warm) thou beginnest to be evil at ease. But if thou give thy-

self to fervour, thou shalt find great peace and thou shalt feel labour lighter for the grace of God and love of virtue. A fervent man and a diligent is ready to all things. There is more labour in withstanding vices and passions than to sweat in bodily labours.

He that escheweth not small defaults little and little shall slide in to greater.

Thou shalt ever joy at eventide if thou spend the day fruitfully.

Watch upon thyself, stir thyself, admonish thyself: and how ever it be with other, forget not thyself. So much thou shalt profit as thou doest violence to thyself.

Here endeth the first party of musica ecclesiastica. And now follow the chapters of the ij party.

PART II

CHAPTER I

HERE BEGINNETH CONCERNING THE ADMONITIONS DRAWING GREATLY INWARD. OF INWARD CONVERSATION.

Our Lord saith that the kingdom of heaven is within you. Turn thyself to God with all thine heart and forsake this wretched world and thy soul shall find rest.

Learn to despise outward things and to turn thee to inward things and thou shalt see the kingdom come into thee; for the kingdom of God is peace and joy in the Holy Ghost the which is not given to wicked men.

Christ shall come to thee showing thee his consolation if thou make for him within thee a worthy dwelling place; all his glory and honour is within and there is his plesaunce

His visitation is common and oft with an inward man; with *him* is his sweet talking, gracious consolation, much wonderful familiarity.

Eh, thou true soul, array thy soul for thy spouse that he may vouchsafe to come to thee and to dwell in thee: for thus he saith "whoso loveth me shall keep my word and to him we shall come and in him make our dwelling place." Wherefore give Christ place and as to all other hold them out.

When thou hast Christ thou art rich and it sufficeth thee; he shall be thy provisor thy true procurator in all things, so that thou shalt not need to trust in man. Men are soon changed and fail soon; Christ abideth for ever and standeth steadfastly unto the end.

Great trust is not to be put in a mortal and frail man though he be profitable and well beloved: nor great sorrow to be felt though sometimes he withstand thee and is contrary. They that are this day with thee to-morrow they may be contrary; and in contrary wise they be ofttimes turned as the wind.

Put all thy trust in God, let him be thy dread, let him be thy love; he shall answer for thee and do well and as is best.

Thou hast here no dwelling city and wherever thou be thou art as a stranger and a pilgrim: here gettest thou no rest, unless thou be inwardly one with Christ.

Why lookest thou about here, since this is not the place of thy resting? In heavenly things ought to be thine habitation and all earthly are to be considered as in a manner of passing; for all things pass and thou also with them. Look that thou cleave not to them lest thou be taken with them and perish.

Let thy thinking be on the high God and let thy prayer be lift up unto Christ without intermission. If thou canst not behold high celestial things, rest in the passion of Christ and dwell gladly in his holy wounds; for it thou flee devoutly to the wounds and the precious prints of Christ thou shall find great comfort in tribulation nor thou shalt not

greatly care for man's despisings and thou shalt lightly bear backbiting words; for Christ was despised of men in this world and in his greatest need suffered reproofs, forsaken of his friends and of his known men.

Christ would suffer and be despised; and thou wilt have all men friends and benefactors?

Christ had adversaries and suffered shrewd speakers; and thou darest complain on any body?

How shall thy patience be crowned if there come no adversity? If thou wilt suffer no contrary, how shalt thou be the friend of Christ? Suffer for Christ and with Christ if thou wilt reign with Christ.

If thou hadst once perfectly entered in to the innerness of Jesu and hadst savoured a little of his burning love, thou wouldst have set naught by thine own profit or harm but rather thou wouldst rejoice of reproof done to thee; for the love of Jesu maketh a man set naught of himself.

A lover of Jesu and a very inward man and free from inordinate affections may freely turn himself to God and lift himself above himself in spirit and there rest joyously.

The man to whom all things taste as they be, not as they are said or thought to be he, is very wise and taught more by God than by men.

He that can go within and praise things without but little, he seeketh no place, nor abideth for no times to have devout exercises. The inward man soon gathereth himself together for he never poureth himself out wholly over outward things. Outward labour hindereth him not nor needful occupation of

the day, but so as things come, so he giveth himself to them.

He that is well disposed and ordained within, he careth not for the wicked and wonderful conduct and bearing of men.

Just so much is a man hindered and distracted as things are drawn to him.

If it were well with thee and thou wert well purged all should turn for thee to good and profit.

Many things as yet trouble thee and displease thee, for thou art not yet dead to thyself nor parted from all earthly things: nothing so defouleth and entangleth man's heart as impure love in created things.

If thou forsake outward comfort thou shalt be able to behold heavenly things and ofttimes have jubilation within.

CHAPTER II

OF MEEK SUBMISSION

SET not much by this—who is against thee or with thee but so do and care that God be with thee.

In every thing that thou dost have a good conscience and God shall defend thee: for him that God will help no man's overthwartness shall be able to annoy.

If thou canst be still and suffer thou shalt see without any doubt the help of our Lord; he knoweth the time and manner of helping thee and therefore thou oughtest to reserve thyself for him.

To God it belongeth to help and to deliver from all confusion.

Ofttimes it availeth to the keeping of greater meekness that other men should know our faults and reprove them.

When a man humbleth himself for his faults then he appeaseth others lightly and easily maketh satisfaction to them that were displeased.

The meek man God defendeth and delivereth, the meek man he loveth and comforteth, to the meek man he bareth himself, to the meek man he granteth great grace and after his humbling he lifteth him

in glory; to the meek man he sheweth his secrets and draweth him and calleth him sweetly.

The meek man receiving reproofs or wrong or confusion is in peace well enough, for he standeth in God and not in the world.

Account thyself never to have profited till thou feel thee lower than all others.

CHAPTER III

OF A GOOD PEACEABLE MAN

SET thyself first in peace and then shalt thou be able to set others at peace

A peaceable man availeth more than a great learned man.

A passionate man turneth good into evil and soon believeth evil: a good peaceable man draweth all things to good.

He that is well in peace hath suspicion against no man; he that cannot be content but is moved, he is shaken with many suspicions; neither can he be in rest nor suffer others to be in rest. Ofttimes he saith that he should not say and leaveth that which were more expedient to do; he considereth what other men ought to do and taketh no heed to his own charge.

Have therefore first zeal to better thyself and then mayst thou have zeal to thy neighbour.

Thou canst well excuse and colour thine own deeds but other men's excuses thou wilt not receive. It were more righteous first to accuse thyself and to excuse thy brother.

If thou wilt be borne, bear thou another.

See how far thou art yet from true charity and meekness the which can not be wroth, nor have indignation with no man but only with itself.

It is not a great thing for a man to be conversant with good men and mild men: for that pleaseth all men naturally and every man gladly hath peace with them that feel as he doth; and such he loveth.

But for a man to live peaceably with hard and overthwart men indisciplined and contrarious is a great grace and a commendable and a manly deed.

There are some that keep themselves at peace and have peace with others also; and there be some also that neither have peace themselves nor suffer others to have peace; to others they be grievous but most grievous to themselves. And there be that keep their peace in themselves and study to reduce other men to peace.

Nevertheless all our peace in this wretched life is rather to be set in meek suffering than in not feeling what goes contrary.

He that can well suffer shall find most peace; he is an overcomer of himself, lord of the world, the friend of Christ and the heir of heaven.

CHAPTER IV

OF PURE AND SIMPLE INTENTION

A MAN is lift up from earthly things with ij wings—they are simplicity and purity; simplicity ought to be in intention, purity in affection: simplicity intendeth God, purity taketh him and tasteth him.

There shall no good deed hinder thee if thou be free within from inordinate affection.

If thou intend not nor seek nothing else but the pleasing of God and the profit of thy neighbour thou shalt have inward liberty. If thine heart were right, then every creature should be to thee a mirror of life and a book of holy doctrine. There is no creature so little nor so vile but it represents the goodness of God.

If thou were inward, good and pure, then shouldest thou see all things without impediment and understand them.

A pure heart pierceth heaven and hell.

Such as every man is inwardly so he judgeth outwardly.

If there be any joy in this world the man of pure heart hath it; and if there be in any place tribulation and anguish an idle conscience knoweth it best.

Like as iron put in the fire loseth his rust and shall be made bright: so a man turning him wholly to God is freed and taken from sloth and changed into a new man.

When a man beginneth to wax luke(warm) then he dreadeth a little labour and receiveth gladly outward consolation: but when he beginneth perfectly to overcome himself and to go manly in the way of God then he setteth little by those things that before seemed to him right grievous.

CHAPTER V

OF CONSIDERATION OF ONESELF

We ought not to believe ourselves overmuch for ofttimes grace is lacking in us and understanding. Little light is in us and ofttimes we lose that by negligence. And also ofttimes we perceive not how blind we are within.

Ofttimes we do evil, and worse—we excuse it.

Ofttimes we be moved (to anger) and think that it is zeal.

We reprove small things in others and pass over our own faults that are greater.

We feel and weigh soon enough what we suffer from others; but how much others suffer from us, of this we take no heed.

He that would ponder well and truly his own faults he should find naught to judge in others grievously. An inward man before all other things taketh care of himself and he that diligently taketh heed of himself holdeth his peace of others. Thou shalt never be an inward and devout man unless thou keep silence of other men and specially behold thyself. If thou take heed only to God and to thyself what thou perceivest outside thee shall little move thee.

Where art thou when thou art not present to thyself? And when thou hast run over all things, taking no heed of thyself, what hast thou profited?

If thou wilt have peace and very unity thou must set all aside and only have thyself before thine eyes; and then thou shalt profit much if thou keep holiday and rest from every temporal care.

Thou shalt greatly fail if thou set great store by any temporal thing. Let nothing be great or high or acceptable to thee but purely God. All things deem as vain comfort that come from any creature —the soul that loveth God, let her despise all things but God alone.

God alone, everlasting and great, without any measure, fulfilling all things; he is the solace of man's soul and true gladness of heart

CHAPTER VI

OF THE GLADNESS OF A GOOD CONSCIENCE

THE joy of a good man is the witness of a good conscience: have a good conscience and thou shalt ever have gladness.

A good conscience may bear right many (very many) things and is right glad among adversities: an evil conscience is ever dreadful and out of quiet.

Thou shalt rest sweetly if thine heart reprehend thee not.

Be not glad but when thou hast done well.

Evil men have never true gladness nor never feel inward peace; for as our Lord saith there is no peace to wicked men; and if they say "we are in peace, there shall none evils come upon us" believe them not, for the wrath of God shall arise suddenly and their deeds shall be brought to naught and their thoughts shall perish.

For a man to rejoice in tribulation is not grievous to him who loves; for so to joy is to joy in the cross of Christ.

Short is the glory that is given and taken by men; and sorrow followeth ever the glory of the world.

The glory of good men is in their conscience and not in the mouths of men.

The gladness of righteous men is of God and in God: and their joy is of truth.

He that desireth everlasting and true glory setteth no care on that which is temporal: and he that seeketh not temporal glory but despiseth it from his heart he must needs love heavenly glory. He hath great tranquillity of heart that setteth nothing by praisings or blamings.

He whose conscience is clean, he will soon be content and pleased. Thou art not the holier though thou be praised nor the more vile though thou be blamed or dispraised.

What thou art, that thou art; that God knoweth thee to be and thou canst be said to be no greater.

If thou take heed what thou art within thou shalt not reck what men say of thee: man looketh on the visage and God on the heart; man considereth the deeds and God praiseth the thoughts.

For a man ever to do well and to hold (think) little of himself is token of a meek soul.

For a man not to wish to be comforted by any creature is a token of great purity and of inward trust.

He that seeketh no outward witness for himself, it appeareth openly that he hath committed himself all wholly to God: for (as the apostle saith) he that commendeth himself is not approved but only he whom God commendeth.

The state of the inner man is to walk with God and to be held by no outward affection.

CHAPTER VII

OF THE LOVE OF JESU ABOVE ALL THINGS

BLISSFUL is he that understandeth what it is to love Jesu and to despise himself for Jesu.

It behoveth thee to forsake all things for the loved one, for Jesu would be loved alone above all things: the love of a creature is failing and unstable; the love of Jesu is true and persevering.

He that cleaveth to a creature shall fall with the sliding creature; he that clippeth (embraceth) Jesu shall be made steadfast forever.

Love him and hold him fast as a friend which, when all goeth away, shall not forsake thee nor shall not suffer thee to perish at the end.

From all things thou must be departed some time whether thou wilt or not. Hold thee with Jesu living and dying and commit thee to his trust, who, all other failing, alone may help thee.

Thy beloved is of such nature that he will admit no stranger, but he alone will have thy heart and there sit as a king on his own throne.

If thou couldest well free thee from every creature Jesu would gladly dwell with thee

Thou shalt find almost all lost whatever trust thou settest in creatures: trust not nor lean not upon a windy reed: for every flesh is grass and all his glory shall fall as the flower of grass.

Thou shalt soon be deceived if thou look only to the outer appearance of men. If thou seek thy solace and thy lucre in others, thou shalt ofttimes find hindrances to thee.

If thou seek Jesu in all things, thou shalt find Jesu; and if thou seek thyself thou shalt find thyself but—to thine own harm.

A man hurteth himself more, if he seeketh not Jesu, than all the world and all his adversaries can hurt him.

CHAPTER VIII

OF THE FAMILIAR FRIENDSHIP OF JESU

WHEN Jesu is nigh all goodness is nigh and nothing seemeth hard: but when Jesu is not nigh all things are hard.

When Jesu speaketh not within, the comfort is of little price; but if Jesu speak one word, there is found great comfort.

Did not Mary Mawdeleyn rise out of her place wherein she wept, anon as Martha said "Our master is nigh and calleth thee?"

Blissful is that man whom, when Jesu cometh, he calleth from tears to the joy of the spirit.

How dry and how hard thou art without Jesu; how unsavoury, how vain, if thou covet anything without Jesu; whether is it not more harm than if thou lost all the world?

What may the world avail thee without Jesu? to be without Jesu is a grievous hell and to be with Jesu is a sweet paradise.

If Jesu be with thee there may no enemy hurt thee.

He that findeth Jesu findeth a good treasure, yea, good above all good; and he that loseth Jesu he loseth over much and more than if he lost all that world.

It is a great craft for a man to be conversant with Jesu; and to know how to hold Jesu is a great prudence.

Be meek and peaceable and Jesu shall be with thee: be devout and restful and Jesu shall abide with thee; thou mayest soon chase out Jesu and lose his grace if thou wilt decline to outer things; and if thou chase out Jesu and lose him, to whom shalt thou flee? and what friend shalt thou seek? Without a friend thou canst not well live, and save Jesu be thy friend before all other, thou shalt be over sorry and over desolate: wherefore thou dost foolishly if thou trust or art glad in any other.

It is more to be chosen for a man to have all the world contrary to him than to have Jesu offended.

Among all therefore that are dear to thee, let Jesu be solely thy darling and thy special (friend).

Let all men be loved for Jesu and Jesu for himself.

Only Jesu Christ is singly to be loved, who only is found good and true before all other friends; for him and in him let both friends and enemies be dear to thee; and for all them he is to be prayed that they may know him and love him.

Desire never to be singularly praised or loved for that belongeth to God alone that hath none like him.

Nor desire not that any man be occupied in his mind about love of thee nor be not thou occupied about no other love: be pure and free within, without impediment or encumbrance of any creature.

Thou must be bare and bear to God a pure heart if thou wilt taste and see how sweet God is: and verily thereto shalt thou never come unless thou be prevented and nourished with his grace, that all things being voided and left, thou alone be united with him.

For when the grace of God cometh to a man then is he mighty to all things: and when it goeth away then shall he be poor and unmighty and as a man left only to scourgings and beatings and pains.

In these things be not thrown down, nor despair not: but stand simply at the will of God and suffer all things that come to thee praising our Lord Jesu Christ: for after winter cometh summer and after even cometh day and after tempest cometh clearness.

CHAPTER IX

OF LACKING OF ALL MANNER OF SOLACE

It is not grievous for a man to set no price as man's solace when God is nigh; but it is great, and right great, for a man to lack both God's solace and man's and for the honour of God gladly to suffer exile of heart and in nothing to seek himself and trust not to his own merit.

What great thing is it, when grace comes, that thou be glad and devout? for that hour is desirable to all men: he rideth easily and merrily whom the grace of God beareth.

And what wonder that he feel no burden, who is borne of the almighty and led of the sovereign leader?

Gladly we take somewhat by way of solace and hard it is for a man to be drawn out of himself.

Saint Laurence overcame the world with his priest: for he despised all things delectable in the world and for the love of God suffered benignly the high priest Sextus whom he most loved to be taken away from him.

The love therefore of the creator overcame the love of man and he chose the well-willing of God before man's solace.

So learn thou to forsake for the love of God some dear friend that is necessary to thee, nor bear it heavily

when thou art forsaken of thy friend knowing that at last we must all depart each from other.

It behoveth a man long time and mightily to strive with himself before a man shall be able perfectly to overcome himself and draw all his affection unto God.

When a man standeth upon himself he slideth lightly to man's consolations but the very true lover of Christ and studious follower of virtue slideth not to consolations nor seeketh such sensible sweetness but rather would suffer for Christ mighty trials and hard labours.

Wherefore, when spiritual consolation is given of God receive it with great thanks and understand it to be the gift of God and not thy merit.

Be not proud nor rejoice not too much nor presume not vainly: but be the more meek for the gift and the more ware and the more anxious in all thy deeds: for that hour shall pass and temptation shall follow.

And when the consolation is taken away despair not anon but with meekness and patience abide the heavenly visitation: for God is mighty enough to give thee greater consolation.

This is no new nor strange thing to them that are expert in the way of God: for ofttimes in great saints and holy prophets hath been this manner of alternation. Wherefore one, grace being present, said "I said in mine abundance I shall never be moved." And, when grace was absent, he rehearsed what he felt, saying "Thou hast turned away and I was troubled." Nevertheless among these things he despised not but prayed God more heartily saying, "Lord to thee shall I cry and I shall pray to my

God." And then he reported the fruit of his prayer, confessing himself to be heard of God, saying "Our Lord hath heard and hath pity on me and is made my helper." But wherein? "Thou hast" he saith "turned my sorrow into joy, and clothed me about with gladness."

If it were done then with great saints, we, feeble and poor, ought not to despair, if some time we be in fervour and some time in coldness; for the holy spirit goeth and cometh after the well pleasing of his will. Wherefore Job saith "Thou visitest him betimes or in the twilight and suddenly thou provest him."

Upon what therefore shall I hope or in whom shall I trust but in the great mercy of God and only in hope of heavenly grace?

Whether good men be nigh thee or devout brethren or true friends or holy books or fair treatises or sweet songs and melodious hymns; all these help but little, savour but little.

When I am forsaken of grace and left in my poverty then is there no better remedy than patience and denying of myself in the will of God.

I have found no man so religious or devout that feeleth not some time withdrawing of grace or diminution of fervour. There was never saint so highly ravished or illumined but that later or earlier he was tempted: for he is not high in the contemplation of God who is not tried for God in some tribulation: and tribulation going before is wont to be a token of consolation following; for to them that are proved in temptations is promised heavenly comfort.

"He that overcometh" saith our Lord "I shall give him to eat of the tree of life." Heavenly comfort is given that a man should be stronger to sustain adversities; temptation also followeth lest man be proud of the gift; the devil sleepeth never and the flesh is not dead.

Wherefore, cease not to array thee to battle: for both on the right hand and on the left are enemies that never cease.

CHAPTER X

OF THANKS FOR THE GRACE OF GOD

WHY seekest thou rest since thou art born to labour? Put thee to patience more than to consolations and to bear the cross more than to gladness.

What secular man is there that would not gladly have spiritual consolations and gladness if he might have it for ever? for spiritual consolations pass all the delights of the world and all fleshly pleasures.

For all the delights of the world, either they are vain or foul, but spiritual delights are jocund and honest, engendered of gentle virtues and infused into pure minds by God.

But no man may use these divine consolations at his own will; for the time of temptation ceaseth not for long.

False liberty and trust in self are much contrary to heavenly visitation.

God doth well in giving grace of consolation but man doth evil not giving all to God with thanks: and the gifts of God can not flow in on us, for we be ungrateful to the giver and we refund not again all to the original well.

Grace is ever due to him that thinketh worthily and that shall be taken away from the proud man which is wont to be given to meek men.

I wish not that consolation which shall take away

from me compunction; nor do I desire that contemplation which shall bring me into elation: for not every high thing is holy, nor every sweet thing good, nor every desire pure, nor every dear thing acceptable to God.

I receive gladly that grace whereby I am found the more meek, the more anxious, and the more ready to forsake myself.

He that is taught with the gift of grace and learned (taught) with the beatings of its withdrawal dare ascribe nothing to himself but rather will acknowledge himself poor and naked.

Give to God that is his and ascribe to thyself that is thine: give God thanks for his grace and to thyself guilt and pain known to be due to thee for thy guilt.

Put thee ever at the lowest and the highest shall be given to thee: for the highest can not stand without the lowest.

The highest saints before God are lowest before themselves; and the more glorious that they be, the more meek they are in themselves.

They that are full of truth and heavenly glory are not desirous of vain glory.

They that are grounded and confirmed in God are not proud;

And they that ascribe all to God whatever good they receive they seek not glory each of the other but they wish the glory that is only of God; and they desire God to be praised in himself and in his saints above all things: and to that evermore they tend.

Be thankful therefore for a little thing and thou shalt be worthy to take a greater: let also the least

thing be to thee as the greatest and the least of price as a special gift.

If the dignity of the giver be considered there shall no gift appear little that is given of the high God: yea if he give pains and beatings it ought to be taken gladly: for all is done for our help, whatever he suffereth to come to us.

He that desireth to keep the grace of God let him be thankful for the grace given and patient when it is taken away: let him pray that it come again and be ware and meek that he lose it not.

CHAPTER XI

OF THE FEWNESS OF THE LOVERS OF THE CROSS OF CHRIST

Jesu hath many lovers of the kingdom of heaven but few bearers of the cross; he hath many who desire consolations and few desiring tribulations: he findeth many fellows of the table and few of abstinence.

All desire to joy with him; but few will suffer any pain for him.

Many follow Jesu unto the breaking of the bread, but few unto the drinking of the cup of the passion.

Many worship his miracles but few follow the reproof of the Cross.

Many love Jesu when no adversity happeneth.

Many praise him and bless him while they take any consolations from him; but if Jesu hide himself and forsake them a little, they fall into a complaining or into over great dejection.

But they that love Jesu for Jesu, and not for any consolations, they bless him in every tribulation and anguish of heart as in the highest consolation; and if he would never give them consolation yet would they ever praise him and ever thank him.

O how mighty is the pure love of Jesu when it is mingled with no love of self nor profit of self.

Whether all they that always seek consolations are not to be called mercenaries and hired men?

Whether are they not proved lovers of themselves and not of Christ who think of their own lucre and profit? where is found one that will serve God freely?

Seldom shall there be any man found so spiritual that will be naked from all worldly things. And who shall find a man very poor in spirit and bare from every creature? his price is from the uttermost coasts [1]

If a man give all his substance, it is as naught; and if he do great penance yet it is but little; and if he apprehend all manner of science yet is he far: and if he have great virtue and right fervent devotion, yet him lacketh much; but one thing is sovereignly necessary to him. What is that? that, all things forsaken, he forsake himself and go wholly out of himself and retain nothing of self-love.

When he hath done all things that he knoweth how to do let him feel himself to have done naught.

Let him not weigh as great all that may be esteemed great; but let him in truth pronounce himself an unprofitable servant, as the truth saith "when ye have done all things that are commanded to you say that we are unprofitable servants." For such a one may say with the prophet that "I am sole and poor" when he beginneth verily to be bare and poor in spirit.

Nevertheless no man is richer, no man is mightier, no man more free than he that can forsake himself and all things and put himself at the lowest.

[1] *i.e.* As a gem that is brought from far.

CHAPTER XII

OF THE KING'S HIGHWAY OF THE CROSS

THIS word "deny thyself and take thy cross and follow me" seemeth a hard word to many men: but much harder it shall be to hear this word "Go from me ye cursed people into the fire everlasting."

They that gladly hear and follow the word of the cross shall not dread the word of everlasting damnation.

This sign of the cross shall be in heaven when our Lord shall come to judgment.

Then all the servants of the cross that have conformed them to Christ in their life shall come nigh unto Christ the judge with great trust.

Why dreadest thou therefore to take the cross whereby men go to the kingdom?

In the cross is health, in the cross is life, in the cross is protection from enemies, in the cross is infusion of heavenly sweetness, in the cross is strength of mind, in the cross is joy of spirit, in the cross is the sum of virtue, in the cross is perfection of holiness: there is no health of soul nor hope of everlasting life, but in the cross. Take thy cross therefore and follow Jesu and thou shalt go into life everlasting.

He that bare his own cross is gone before and died for thee on the cross that thou shouldest bear thy cross and desire to die on the cross: and if thou be fellow in pain thou shalt be fellow in glory.

Lo, in the cross standeth all things and in dying lieth all: and there is none other way to life and to very inward peace but the way of the holy cross and of daily mortifying for if thou be dead with him thou shalt also live with him.

Walk therefore where thou wilt, seek wherever it pleaseth thee, and thou shalt find no higher way above nor surer way beneath than the way of the cross.

Dispose and ordain all things after thy will and thy seeming and thou shalt not find it anything but a duty to suffer somewhat either willingly or against thy will and thou shalt ever find the cross.

Thou shalt either suffer sorrow in thy body or tribulation of spirit in the soul.

Sometimes thou shalt be forsaken of God and sometimes thou shalt be stirred by thy neighbour and, what more is, sometimes thou shalt be grievous to thyself.

And yet it shall not lie in thy power to be eased or delivered with no remedy and with no solace; but, while God will, thou must needs suffer and bear.

God willeth that thou shalt learn to suffer tribulation without comfort, for thou shouldest subdue all things to him and be the meeker for tribulation.

No man so heartily feeleth the passion of Christ as he that suffereth like things.

The cross therefore is ever ready and over all things it abideth for thee: thou canst not flee it, wherever thou run; and wherever thou come, thou bearest thyself with thee, and ever thou shalt find thyself.

Turn thyself above, turn thyself below, turn thyself outward, turn thyself inward; and in all these thou

shalt find the cross; and everywhere it is needful for thee to keep patience, if thou wilt have inward peace and deserve a crown everlasting.

If thou bear the cross gladly, it shall bear thee, and lead thee to a desirable end, where an end shall be of suffering—though it be not here.

If thou bear it against thy will thou makest for thyself an heavy burden and grievest thyself more and yet must thou needs sustain it.

If thou put away one cross doubtless thou shalt find another and peradventure a more grievous one.

Thinkest thou to escape what never mortal man might escape? what saint in this world was without cross and tribulation? Not our Lord Jesu Christ was without sorrow of passion one hour in all his life. The evangelist saith "It behoved Christ to suffer and to rise from death and so to enter into his glory." And how seekest thou another way than the king's highway, the cross way? All Christ's life was a cross and a martyrdom: and thou seekest to thyself rest and joy.

Thou errest, thou goest out of the way if thou seek other thing to thee than tribulation, for all this mortal life is full of miseries and marked all about with crosses; and the higher that a man profiteth in spirit the higher crosses ofttimes he findeth: for the pain of his exile groweth more through love.

Nevertheless this man, thus pained, is not without some manner of comfort: for he feeleth great fruit grow to him through the suffrance of his cross; for while he gladly subdueth him thereto, all burden of tribulation is turned into trust of divine consolation; and the more that the flesh is thrown

down by affliction, the more the spirit is strengthened by inward grace.

And ofttimes he is so greatly comforted and strengthened that for desire of tribulation and adversity, for love of conformity to the cross of Christ, he would not be without sorrow and tribulation; for the more acceptable he accounteth himself to God, the more and the greater are the pains that he must suffer for God.

This is not man's might but the grace of Christ that man doeth so great things in his frail flesh, that through fervour of spirit he can take upon him and love that thing which the flesh ever naturally fleeth and abhorreth.

It is not like man to bear the cross, to love the cross, to chastise the body, to bring it to thraldom, to flee honour, gladly to sustain reproofs and wrongs, to despise himself and to will to be despised, to suffer all manner of adversities with harms and to desire no manner of prosperity in this world.

If thou look to thyself, thou canst do no such thing of thyself; but, if thou trust in our Lord, strength shall be given to thee from heaven, and the world and the flesh shall be made subject to thy commandment: nor shalt thou dread thine enemy the devil, if thou be armed with faith and marked with the cross.

Put thee therefore forward as a good and true servant of Christ to bear manly the cross of thy Lord crucified for thee through love. Make thee ready to suffer many contrary things and diverse incommodities in this wretched life: for so he shall be

with thee wherever thou be and so thou shalt find him wherever thou be hid.

It must be so: for there is no remedy of scaping from tribulation of evil men and sorrow—except that thou suffer.

Drink the chalice of our Lord lovingly if thou desire to be his friend and to have part with him. Consolations commit thou to God: let him do therewith as it pleaseth him.

Put thou thyself forward to suffer tribulations and account them as greatest consolations; for there are no passions of this time worthy to deserve the glory that is to come, yea, though thou mightest suffer all alone.

When thou comest to this, that tribulation is sweet to thee and is savoury to thee for Christ then deem it well with thee: for thou hast found paradise in earth.

As long as it is grievous to thee to suffer and thou seekest to flee it, so long shall it be evil with thee, and fleeing after thee, tribulation shall follow thee everywhere.

If thou puttest thee forward, as thou oughtest to do, to suffer and to die, it shall soon be better and thou shalt find peace.

Yea, if thou be ravished into the third heaven with Paul, thou art not yet sure to suffer no contrary thing: for Jesu said "I shall shew him how great things he must suffer for my name."

To suffer therefore remaineth to thee if thou wilt love and ever please him.

Would God that thou were worthy to suffer any thing for the name of Jesu: how great glory should be to thee, how great exultation to all the saints of

heaven, how great edification of thy neighbour; for all men commend patience, though few will suffer.

Thou shouldest gladly suffer for Christ since men suffer much more grievous things for the world.

Know for certain that thou must lead a dying life; and the more that a man dieth to himself, the more he beginneth to live to God: there is no man apt (fit) to take heavenly things unless he submit himself to bear adversities for Christ.

There is nothing more acceptable to God, nothing more wholesome to thee in this world than gladly to suffer for Christ: and if it lay in thy choice, thou shouldest rather desire to suffer contrary things for Christ than to be refreshed with many consolations: for thou wouldest be more like unto Christ and be more conformed to all saints.

For our merit and the profiting of our estate standeth not in sweetness and consolations but rather in suffering of grievous things and tribulations: for if there had been any thing more better or more profitable to man than to suffer, Christ would verily have shown it by word and example: but he exhorted all his disciples and all them that desired to follow him openly to bear the cross saying "Who that will come after me, let him deny himself and take his cross and follow me"

All things therefore being read over and searched, be this the final conclusion, that by many tribulations it behoveth us to enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Here end the admonitions drawing inward. And here follow the chapters of the third book that is of inward consolation.

PART III

CHAPTER I

HERE BEGINNETH THE THIRD PART—OF INWARD CONVERSATION. OF THE INWARD SPEAKING OF CHRIST UNTO A SOUL

I SHALL hear what our Lord Christ speaketh in me. Blissful is that soul that heareth our Lord speaking in him and taketh from his mouth the word of consolation. Blessed be those ears that receive of God's rounding (whisper) and take no heed of the rounding of this world. Plainly those ears are blessed that take no heed to the outward sounding voice but to the truth teaching inwardly. Blessed be those eyes that are closed to earthly things and attend to the inward things. Blessed are they that pierce inward things and study to make themselves ready by daily exercises more and more to take heavenly secrets. Blissful are they that desire to take heed to God and cast themselves out from all impediments of the world.

Take heed hereto, my soul, and close up the doors of thy sensuality (senses) that thou mayst hear what thy Lord God speaketh in thee. Thus saith thy well beloved, Thine help am I, thy peace, and thy life: keep thee with me and thou shalt find peace.

Leave all transitory things and seek everlasting. What are all temporal things but deceivers and what avail all creatures if thou be forsaken of thy creator? All other things therefore set aside, yield thyself pleasant and true to thy creator that thou mayst win very felicity.

CHAPTER II

THAT THE WORDS OF GOD ARE TO BE HEARD WITH MEEKNESS

SPEAK Lord for thy servant heareth. I am thy servant: give me understanding that I may know thy testimonies. Bow my heart to the words of thy mouth; let thy speech flow as sweet dew.

The children of Israel said on a time to Moses "Speak thou to us and we shall hear thee: let not our Lord speak lest we die."

Lord, Lord, not so; I pray not so, but rather with Samuel the prophet, meekly and affectionately I beseech thee "Speak thou, Lord, for thy servant heareth."

Let therefore Moses not speak to me, nor none of the prophets: but speak thou rather, Lord God, inspirer and illuminer of prophets; for thou alone without them mayst teach me perfectly: but they without thee shall nothing profit. They may sound words well but they give no spirit. They say passingly fair, but, if thou speak not, they set nothing afire. They take us to the letter, but thou openest the wit (meaning). They bring forth mysteries but thou makest open the understanding of the secrets. They tell out commandments but thou helpest us to perform them. They show the way but thou makest us strong to go. They

work all without, but thou teachest and illuminest the hearts. They water from without, but thou givest increase. They cry with words, but to the hearing thou givest understanding. Let not therefore Moses speak to me but thou, my Lord God, everlasting truth: lest I die and be made unfruitful, lest I be only admonished outwardly and not set afire inwardly.

Therefore, lest the word heard and not done be to me my judgment, or the word known and not loved, or the word believed and not kept, speak thou, Lord, for thy servant heareth. Thou hast words of life everlasting; speak to me to some manner of comfort to my soul and to the amendment of my life; and to thee Lord be praise, glory, and everlasting honour.

CHAPTER III

THAT THE WORDS OF GOD ARE TO BE HEARD WITH MEEKNESS

SON hear my words most sweet and passing the cunning of all the philosophers and all the wise men of this world. My words are spirit and life: they are not to be peised (weighed) with man's wits.

They be not to be turned to vain pleasure but to be heard in silence and to be taken with meekness and great desire.

And I said: Blissful is he whom thou hast learned and hast taught him of thy law that thou may make him a mitigation from evil days that the earth be not desolate.

I, saith our Lord, have taught the prophets from the beginning and until now I cease not to speak to all but many be hard and deaf to my voice, many more gladly hear the world than God: they follow more lightly the appetite of their flesh than the good pleasure of God.

The world promiseth temporal things and little things and is served with great greediness: and I promise most high things and everlasting and mortal men's hearts wax sluggish.

Who serveth and obeyeth me in all things as men serve the world and its lords? The sea said, "Be ashamed, Sidon"; and if thou ask the cause, hear why. For a little prebend men run a long way; but for everlasting life scarce the foot is once lift up from the earth.

A thing of little price is busily sought: other whiles men strive for one penny right shamefully; men dread not to weary themselves night and day for a vain thing, for a little promise. But, alas, for good incommutable, for need inestimable, for sovereign honour, for endless glory men will not suffer the least weariness.

Be ashamed therefore thou sluggish and complaining servant that they are more ready for perdition than thou for life; they joy more at vanity than thou at truth.

And lo, ofttimes they are defrauded of their hope: but my promise deceiveth no man; nor leaveth no man void that trusteth me.

That I have promised, I shall give: that I have said I shall fulfil, so that a man abide true in my love until the end.

I am rewarder of all good men and a mighty prover of all devout men. Write my words in thine heart and treat them diligently for in time of tribulation they shall be full necessary. That that thou knowest not when thou readest, thou shalt truly know in time of visitation.

I am wont in two manners to visit my chosen children that is to say with temptation and consolation.

And every day I read them two lessons: one in blaming their vices, another exhorting them to everlasting virtues.

He that heareth my words and despiseth them hath that shall doom (judge) him in the last day.

CHAPTER IV

A PRAYER TO ASK GRACE OF DEVOTION

My Lord God all my goods thou art: and who am I that dare speak to thee? I am thy most poor servant, and an abject worm much poorer and more contemptible than I can or dare say. Nevertheless have mind that I am naught worth. Thou alone art good, righteous and holy: thou canst do all things: thou givest all things, thou fillest all things leaving void the sinner. Bring to mind thy pity and fulfil mine heart with thy grace for thou wilt not that thy work should be void. How may I suffer myself in this wretched life, unless thou comfort me with thy mercy and thy grace? Lord, turn not away thy face from me: prolong not thy visitation; withdraw not thy consolation, lest my soul be as earth without water to thee. Lord teach me to do thy will; teach me to live worthily and meekly for thee; for thou art my wisdom, thou knowest me truly and knewest me or ever the world were made and or ever I were born in the world.

CHAPTER V

THAT A MAN OUGHT TO LIVE BEFORE GOD IN TRUTH AND IN MEEKNESS

Son, go before me in truth, and in simplicity of heart seek me ever. He that goeth before me in truth shall be made sure from evil availings and truth shall deliver him from deceivers and from detractions of wicked men. If truth deliver thee thou shalt be verily free and thou shalt not reck of men's vain words.

Lord it is true that thou sayest: and, as thou sayest, so I beseech thee may it be with me. Let thy truth teach me, thy truth keep me and bring me to an healthful end.

Let her deliver me from all evil affection and inordinate loving and I shall go with thee in great liberty of heart.

Truth saith, I shall teach thee those things that are right and pleasant to me.

Think on thy sins with great displeasure and mourning and never account thyself anything for any good works. Verily a sinner thou art and encumbered and wrapped in many passions; of thyself ever thou drawest to naught; soon thou slidest, soon thou art overcome, soon thou art dissolved.

Thou hast nothing whereof thou mayst rejoice thee but many things thou hast whereof thou oughtest to set little by thyself; for thou art more sick than thou canst conceive.

Wherefore let nothing seem great to thee of all things that thou doest, nothing precious, nothing wonderful; let nothing appear to thee worthy any reputation, for verily there is none other thing here laudable or desirable but that which is everlasting.

And above all things let everlasting truth please thee; let ever thy great vileness and unworthiness displease thee.

Dread nothing so much, blame nor flee nothing so much, as thy vices and thy sins the which ought to displease thee more than any worldly harm.

Some go not clearly before me but they be led with all manner of curiosity and arrogance, willing to know my secrets and to understand the high things of God, taking no heed of themselves and of their souls' health.

These folk, being displeased, ofttimes fall into great temptations for their pride and their curiosity.

Dread the judgments of God, be aghast of the wrath of him that is almighty

Discuss not the works of the highest God: but search thy wickedness, in how many things thou hast trespassed and how many good deeds thou hast negligently left.

Some bear their devotion alone in their looks, some in images, some in outward signs and figures: some have me in mouth but little is there in the heart.

There be other that being illumined in the understanding and purged in affection, desire laboriously things everlasting, grieving to hear of earthly things: they serve the necessities of nature with great sorrow; and these feel what the spirit of truth speaketh in them for he teacheth them to love heavenly things, to set no price by the world and day and night to desire heaven.

CHAPTER VI

OF THE WONDERFUL EFFECT OF THE LOVE OF GOD

I BLESS thee, heavenly father, the father of my Lord Jesu Christ for thou vouchest safe to have mind on me most poor.

O father of mercies and God of all consolation I thank thee that refreshest me with thy consolations, me that am unworthy all manner of comfort.

I bless thee ever and glorify thee with thine only begotten Son and the Holy Ghost the comforter into worlds of worlds (for ever and ever).

Ah, my Lord God, my holy lover, when thou shalt come into my heart all my inwards shall joy. Thou art my glory and the exultation of mine heart; thou art mine hope and my refuge in the day of my tribulation. But for that I am feeble in love and imperfect in virtue, therefore I have need to be comforted of thee.

Wherefore visit me Lord ofttimes and inform me with holy discipline. Deliver me from mine evil passions, heal mine heart from all inordinate affections; that I, inwardly healed and well purged, may be apt to love, mighty to suffer, stable to persevere.

Love is a great thing, a great good in every wise; it alone maketh light every heavy thing and beareth evenly every uneven thing: for it beareth burden without burden and every bitter thing it maketh sweet and savoury.

The noble love of Jesu stirreth to do great things and ever enticeth to desire more perfect things. Love will be above, not retained with any low things. Love will be free and alienate from all worldly affection lest his inward beholding be let (hindered) lest he be wrapped in and encumbered by any temporal commodity or fall under (disappear) by any incommodity

There is nothing sweeter than love, nothing stronger, nothing higher, nothing broader, nothing more jocund, nothing fuller, nothing better in heaven nor in earth; for love is born of God nor it may not rest but in God above all creatures.

The lover flieth, runneth and is glad; he is free and is not holden. Love giveth all things for all things and it hath all things in all things; for it resteth above all things in one sovereign good of whom all good floweth and proceedeth. It looketh not to the gifts but turneth itself to the giver above all goods. Love ofttimes knows no measure but is fervent above all measure.

Love feeleth no burden, it accounteth no labour, it desireth more than it may attain, it complaineth never of impossibility, for it deemeth itself mighty to all things, and all things be lawful to it. It is valiant therefore to all things, it fulfilleth many things and bringeth them to effect where he that loveth not faileth and lieth still.

Love waketh; and, sleeping, it sleepeth not; love wearied is not weary, and love constrained is not constrained; it, afeard, is not troubled; but as a quick flame and a burning brand, he bursteth upwards and passeth surely (safe). He that loveth

knoweth what this voice crieth. A great cry in the ears of God is that burning affection of soul that saith "My God, my love, thou art all mine and I thine"

Dilate me in love that I may learn to taste with the inward mouth of mine heart how sweet it is to love and in love to melt and to swim. Be I held with love going above myself for excellent fervour and astonishment. May I sing a song of love, may I follow thee my love into the height and let my soul fail in thy praise, jubilee-ing for love.

Let me love thee more than myself and myself only for thee and all in thee that verily love thee as the law of love commandeth shining out of thee.

Love is swift, pure, holy, jocund, merry, strong, patient, true, prudent, long-abiding, manly and never seeking himself. Where any man seeketh himself, there anon he falleth from love.

Love is circumspect, meek and right, not soft, not light, not intending to vain things, sober, chaste, stable, restful, kept in all wits (senses) devout to God and mankind.

Love is subject and obedient to prelates, vile and despicable to himself, trusting ever in God, yea when God savoureth him not, for without sorrow men live not in love.

He that is not ready to suffer all things and to stand at the will of his beloved, is not worthy to be called a lover. It behoveth the lover gladly to clip (grasp) to himself all manner hard things and bitter things for his beloved and not to bow (turn) from him for any contrary things that happen to fall.

CHAPTER VII

OF PROVING OF TRUE LOVE

Son, yet art thou not a mighty and a prudent lover.

Why, Lord?

For as much as for a little contrariousness thou failest in things begun, and over-greedily seekest consolation. A strong lover standeth in temptations nor will he believe the wily persuasions of the enemy. As I please him in prosperity, so I displease him not in adversity.

A prudent lover considereth not so much the gift of the lover as the love of the giver; he peiseth (weigheth) more the affection than the value and setteth all the gifts far beneath the beloved. The noble lover resteth not in the gift but in me above all gifts.

It is not therefore all lost, though some times thou feelest not so well of me and of my saints as thou wouldest. That good and sweet affection, that thou perceivest sometimes, is an effect of grace and a manner of foretaste of the heavenly country upon which it is not good to lean overmuch, for it goeth and cometh.

For a man to fight against the evil moving of the soul and to despise the suggestions of the devil is a token of virtue and of great merit. Therefore let no strange fantasies brought in by any matter

trouble thee; keep a mighty purpose and a right intention to God.

It is no illusion that some times thou art suddenly ravished in an excess and turnest anon again to the wonted japes (jests) of thine heart: for thou sufferest these unwillingly rather than doest them and as long as they displease thee, and thou wrestlest against them it is merit and no perdition.

Know well that the enemy laboureth in all wise to stay thy desire in good and to make thee void of all good exercise; from worshipping of saints, from minding of my holy passion, from profitable thinking of thy saints, from keeping of thine heart, and from sad (settled) purpose of profiting in virtue; he putteth in many evil thoughts that he may cause in thee weariness and horror and may revoke thee from prayer and holy reading.

Meek confession displeaseth him, and, if he may, he will make thee to cease from holy communion. Believe him not nor take no hold of him though he ofttimes tend to thee gins of deceit. Impute it to himself when he soweth evil things and unclean. Say to him "Be ashamed, thou unclean spirit, and go away, wretch; thou art full unclean, that bringest such things to mine ears. Go hence, thou wicked deceiver, thou shalt have no part in me, but Jesu shall be with me as a mighty fighter and thou shalt stand confused. I had liever die and suffer all pain than consent to thee. Hold thy peace and be still; I will no more hear thee though thou labour to molest me never so oft. God is mine illumination and mine help, whom shall I dread? If battles be against me mine heart

shall not be afeard. Our Lord is mine helper and my redemptor."

Fight as a good knight, and though sometime thou fall through frailty of flesh, resume strength more mighty than before, trusting on my more large grace and be well ware of vain complacency and pride; for thereby many men be led into error and some time they slide into a blindness incurable. Let it be to thee for a perpetual wariness and meekness—the falling of proud men presuming on themselves.

CHAPTER VIII

OF GRACE TO BE HID UNDER THE WORD OF MEEKNESS

Son, it is more profitable and more sure to thee to hide the grace of devotion and not to lift thyself on high, not to speak much thereof, nor much to peise (weigh) it, but rather to despise thyself and dread lest it be given to thee unworthy.

It is not good to cleave over-toughly to this affection that may so soon be turned into the contrary. Think, when in grace, how wretched and how needy thou wert wont to be, without grace.

Nor is there only spiritual profiting when thou feelest grace of consolation but also when thou bearest meekly and patiently the withdrawing thereof when it is denied; provided thou then be not slow from study of prayer nor let not slide away utterly other works that thou art wont to do, but as thou mayest after thine understanding gladly do that in thee is and for no dryness nor anxiety of mind be not negligent of thyself. For there be many to whom when it cometh not as they would anon they be inipatient or slow.

Man's way is not ever in his own power but to God it belongs to give and to comfort when he will and as much as he will and to whom he will, as it pleaseth him—and no more.

Some indiscreetly for grace of devotion have destroyed themselves. For they do more than they can, peising (weighing) not the measure of their littleness but following more the affection of the heart than the judgment of reason. And for they presumed greater things than God was pleased with, therefore they soon lost grace. They were made needy and left as vile that had set their nest in heaven, that they, made so meek and poor, might learn not to fly on their own wings but to hope and trust under my feathers.

They that be yet new and inexpert in the way of God, unless they be governed by the counsel of discreet men, may soon be deceived and hurt. And if they will follow their own feeling rather than believe others that are experienced, the end will be perilous, if they will not be withdrawn from their own conceit. They that seem wise to themselves suffer but seldom to be governed by others.

Better is it to savour but a little with meekness and little understanding than to have great treasures of cunning with vain complacency.

Better is it for thee to have little than much whereof thou mayst be proud. He doth not discreetly that giveth himself all to gladness, forgetting his rather (earlier) poverty and the chaste dread of God, which dreadeth to lose grace that is offered. Nor doth he savour virtuously enough that in time of adversity or any heaviness holdeth himself over desperately and less trustingly thinketh or feeleth of me than it behoveth. For he that in time of peace will be over sure ofttimes in time of battle is found deject and fearful.

If thou couldst at all times abide meek and little in thyself and measure and rule thy spirit, then wouldest thou not fall so soon into peril and into offence.

It is good that, when the fervour of spirit is conceived, thou think what is to come, if the light goeth away; the which when it happeneth to fall (happen) think again that the light may come again the which I have withdrawn for a time to thy warnes (warning) and my glory. Such a proving is ofttimes more profitable than if thou haddest pleasant things at thine own will. For merits be not to be estimated if a man hath many visions and consolations or else be wise in the scriptures or be set in high degree: but if he be grounded in very meekness and fulfilled with divine charity, if he seek in all things purely and wholly the worship of God, if he account himself as naught and despise himself in truth and joy more to be despised and made low of others than to be worshipped, *there* is merit and matter of hope.

CHAPTER IX

OF VILE ESTIMATION OF ONESELF IN THE SIGHT OF GOD

I SHALL speak to my Lord though I be dust and ashes.

If I account myself more, lo thou standest against me and my wickedness beareth witness against me, I may not say nay.

But if I vilify myself and bring me to naught and fail from all manner of proper reputation (thought of myself) and make me dust as I am, thy grace shall be merciful to me and thy light nigh to my heart, and all manner of estimation, be it never so little, shall be drowned in the valley of my naughtiness and shall perish for ever.

There thou showest me myself what I am, what I was, and from whence I came: for I am naught and know not myself. If I be left to myself lo I am naught and all infirmity. If thou behold me suddenly anon I am made strong and am fulfilled with a new joy; and a wonderful thing is it that I am so suddenly lift up and so benignly clipped (embraced) of thee that with mine own weight am ever borne down low. This thy love doth freely, going before me and helping me in so many needs and keeping me from grievous perils and delivering me, as I may truly say, from evils out of number.

In mis-loving I lost both thee and me and in seeking thee alone and in purely loving thee found both thee and me; and through love I brought myself more deeply to naught. For thou, most sweet, dost with me above all manner of merit and above that that I dare hope or pray.

Blessed be thou, my God, for though I be unworthy of all goods, yet thy noblesse and infinite goodness ceaseth not to do well, yea even to the unkind and the far-turned-away from thee.

Convert us Lord to thee that we may be meek, kind and devout, for thou art our help, our virtue, and our strength.

CHAPTER X

THAT ALL THINGS ARE TO BE REFERRED TO GOD AS TO THE LAST END

Son, I ought to be thy last and thy sovereign end if thou desire verily to be blissful; and through this intention shall thine affection be purged that is oft-times evil bowed down to herself and to creatures. For if thou seek thyself in anything anon thou failest in thyself and waxest dry. Wherefore to me refer all things principally for I it am that have given all things

Consider all things as welling from the highest and most sovereign good; and therefore they are to be reduced to me as to their original beginning. Of me little and great, poor and rich, draw quick water as from the well of life: and they that serve me willingly and gladly shall receive grace for (after) grace, but he that hath glory without me or is delighted in any private good shall never be stablished in very joy nor be delighted in heart but shall be let (hindered) in many wises (ways) and anguished.

Therefore thou oughtest to ascribe to thyself no manner of good nor attribute not virtue to any man but all to God without whom man hath naught. I gave all and I will have all again and with strictness I require thanks. This is truth whereby is chased away the vanity of glory.

And if heavenly grace and very charity enter in, there shall be no envy nor contraction of heart: private love shall not occupy it, for divine charity overcometh all things and dilateth all the might of the soul.

If thou savour aright thou shalt joy alone in me for there is no man good but God alone, that is to be praised above all things and to be blessed in all things.

CHAPTER XI

THAT, THE WORLD DESPISED, IT IS MERRY AND SWEET FOR TO SERVE GOD

Now Lord I shall speak again and keep no silence. I shall say in the ears of my God, my Lord, my King, that is on high,

O Lord how great is the multitude of thy sweetness to them that dread thee. But what art thou to thy lovers? what to them that serve thee with all their hearts? Verily the sweetness of thy contemplation that thou grantest to thy lovers is unspeakable. Herein thou showest most the sweetness of thy charity, that, when I was not, thou madest me and when I erred from thee thou leddest me again that I should serve thee and thou commandest me to love thee.

O thou well of everlasting love, what shall I say of thee? How may I forget thee that vouchest safe to have mind on me? Yea after that I failed and perished thou hast been merciful with thy servant above all hope and hast showed grace and friendship above all merit.

What yield I thee again for this grace? It is not given to all that, all things forsaken, they renounce the world and take a religious life. Is that a great thing that I serve thee since every creature is bound to serve thee? It ought not to seem to me a great

thing to serve thee; but rather this appeareth to me great and wonderful, that thou vouchsafe to receive as thy servant me so poor and so unworthy and to one (unite) me to thy well beloved servants.

Lo all things that I have and with the which I serve thee are thine; nevertheless, in contrariwise thou servest me rather than I thee. Lo, heaven and earth, that thou hast made unto man's service are ready and every day do that thou commandest them; and that is little; but, over that, thou hast ordained also angels to man's ministry; but it passeth all—that thou thyself vouchest safe to serve man and madest promise to give thyself to him.

What shall I give thee for all these thousand of goods? Would God I might serve thee all the days of my life. Would God at least I might suffice to do thee worthy service for a day. Verily thou art worthy all manner of service, all worship and everlasting praise. Verily thou art my Lord and I thy poor servant, that am bound with all my might to serve thee and never be weary of thy praise.

Thus I will and thus I desire and what lacketh me vouch thou safe to fulfil. It is a great worship (honour) and a great glory to serve thee and to set all things at no price with (compared with) thee: for they that willingly subdue themselves to thy service shall have grace. And they that for thy most holy love put away fleshly delectation shall find the consolation of the Holy Ghost. They shall get liberty of mind that enter into the straight life and take no heed of no worldly care.

O the acceptable and the jocund service of God whereby a man is verily made free and holy. O the holy state of religious servage, that maketh man even with angels, pleasant to God, fearful to fiends and commendable to all Christian men. O the service to be embraced and even to be desired, whereby the highest and sovereign good is deserved (won) and joy gotten that shall dwell without end.

CHAPTER XII

THAT THE DESIRES OF THE HEART MUST BE EXAMINED AND MODERED (MODERATED)

SON, yet thou must learn much thing the which thou hast not learned as yet.

Lord, what are those?

That thou put thy desire wholly after my well-willing and that thou be not a lover of thyself but a desirous follower of my will. Desires ofttimes set thee on fire and hugely stir thee; but consider whether thou be moved more for my worship or for thine own profit. If I be at the root thou wilt be well content whatever I ordain; and if there be anything of thine own seeking that is hid privily, that it is that letteth (hindereth) and grieveth.

Be ware therefore that thou lean not too much upon any desire before conceived, me not counselled; lest it repent thee afterwards and that displease which first pleased and which thou heldest for the better. For not every affection that seemeth good is to be followed anon nor every contrary affection is to be fled at first.

It is expedient sometimes to use the bridle, yea in good studies and desires, lest by importunity thou fall into distraction of mind, lest thou engender slander in others through indiscipline or else lest thou be suddenly troubled and fall by withstanding of others.

And thy flesh ought so long to be chastised and constrained to be subject in servage, till it learn to be ready for all things and to be content with few, and to delight in simple things and not grudge (grumble) against such things as are not convenient thereto.

CHAPTER XIII

OF THE LEARNING OF PATIENCE AND FIGHTING AGAINST CONCUPISCENCE

LORD, as I see, patience is right needful to me for many contrary things fall in this world. For, however I ordain for my peace, my life may not be without battle and sword.

So it is, son; but I will not that thou seek peace and lack temptations, and feel no contrariousness; but then deem to have found peace when thou art haunted in diverse temptations and proved in many contrary things. If thou say that thou canst not suffer many things how wilt thou then suffer the fire of purgatory?

Of two evils the less is ever to be chosen: wherefore that thou mayst escape torments that are to come study to suffer evenly for God present evils.

What—trowest thou that men of this world suffer naught or little? Nay thou shalt not find that, though thou seek most delicate men. But they have, thou sayest, many delectations and therefore they peise (weigh) little their tribulations. Be it so that they have what they will; but how long hopest thou it shall endure?

Lo they that are abundant in this world shall fail as the smoke and there shall be no more remembrance of the joys passed. And yet while they live they

rest not in them without bitterness, weariness and dread; for ofttimes of the same thing whereof they conceive delectation they receive pain and sorrow. It falleth to them righteously that since they inordinately seek delectations and follow them they should not taste them fully without confusion. O how short, how inordinate, how false, how foul they all be

Nevertheless for drunkenness and blindness they understand not but as dumb beasts run into death of soul for a little delectation of corruptible life. Wherefore, thou, son, go not after thy concupiscence but turn away from thine own will. Delight thee in God and he shall give thee the petitions of thine heart.

Lo if thou wilt verily be delighted and more abundantly be comforted of me, lo, in contempt of all worldly and in cutting away of all lower delights shall be thy blessing and plenteous consolation shall be yielded to thee. And the more that thou withdrawest thyself from consolation of all creatures the sweeter and the mightier comforts thou shalt find in me. But first thou shalt not come to these without sorrow and labour of striving.

The old used custom (habit) will withstand thee but it shall be overcome by a better custom. The flesh will grudge (grumble); but it shall be refrained (bridled) with the fervour of spirit. The old serpent will stir thee and bring thee to bitterness; but with prayer he shall be driven away and with profitable labour his coming in shall be stopped.

CHAPTER XIV

OF OBEDIENCE OF A MEEK SUBJECT BY ENSAMPLE OF OUR LORD JESU

SON, he that laboureth to withdraw himself from obedience he withdraweth himself from grace; and he that seeketh to have private things loseth the common things.

He that freely and gladly subdueth not himself to his sovereign, it is a token that his flesh obeyeth him not perfectly yet but ofttimes kicketh against and grutcheth (grumbleth).

Learn therefore to obey thy sovereign swiftly if thou will that thy flesh shall obey thee; for the outer enemy is sooner overcome, if the inner be destroyed. There is not a more grievous nor a worse enemy of the soul than thou thyself, when not well according to the spirit.

It behoveth thee in all wise to take upon thee very despising of thyself if thou wilt prevail against flesh and blood. But for as much as thou lovest thyself inordinately therefore thou dreadest to resign thyself fully to the will of others. But what great thing is it if thou that art but ashes and naught subdue thyself to man for God.

Since I, almighty and highest, that made all things of naught, meekly made me subject to man for thee

and was made meekest of all and lowest, thou shouldst overcome thy pride with my meekness.

Learn to obey, thou dust; learn to make thyself meek, thou earth and clay, and to bow thyself under the feet of all; learn to break thine own will and to put thee under subjection of all. Be wroth against thyself and suffer no volowing (swelling) pride to live in thee, but show thee so subject and so little that all men may go over thee and tread upon thee as upon mire of the street.

What hast thou, vain man, to complain of? Thou foul sinner, what hast thou to answer thy reprovers, thou that so ofttimes hast offended thy God and so ofttimes deserved hell? But mine eyes have spared thee for thy soul was precious in my sight; that thou shouldst know my love and be ever kind to (grateful for) my benefits and that thou shouldst give thyself continually to very subjection by meekness and bear patiently thine own despising.

CHAPTER XV

OF CONSIDERING THE PRIVY JUDGMENTS OF GOD AGAINST PRIDE

LORD, thou soundest thy dooms (judgments) upon me and shakest all my bones for dread and trembling and my soul is greatly afraid. I stand astonished and consider that heaven is not clean in thy sight. If thou foundest shrewdness (wickedness) in angels and sparedst them not what shall fall of me?

Stars fell from heaven, and I, dust, what presume I? They whose works seemed laudable fell to lowest things and they that ate bread of angels, I saw them delight in swines' draff (food).

Therefore Lord there is no surety if thou withdraw thine hand. There availeth no wisdom if thou leave thy governance. There helpeth no strength, if thou cease to keep. There is no chastity sure if thou defend it not. There availeth no keeping if thy holy watching be not nigh. If we be forsaken we be drowned and perish; if we be visited we are reared up and live. We be unstable but by thee be confirmed. We wax luke(warm) but by thee we be set afire.

O how meekly and abjectly it filleth me to feel of myself and how naught to set by is any good that I seem to have.

O how deeply I ought to submit myself under thy deep

groundless judgments, Lord, where I find myself nothing else but naught—and naught. O weight unmeasurable, O sea intransnatable (through which I cannot swim) when I find nothing of myself but all naught. Where is the lurking hidels (secret boast) of glory, where is the trust conceived of virtue? All vain glory is swallowed up in the deepness of thy judgments upon me.

What is every flesh in thy beholding? Shall clay rejoice itself against him that maketh it? How may he be reared up (uplifted) in vain speech whose heart is subject to God in truth? all the world shall not rear up into pride him whom truth hath made subject to himself: nor shall he be moved by the mouths of all his praisers that steadfasteth all his hope in God.

For they that speak in magnifying themselves, lo, are naught, and they shall fail with the sound of their words; but the truth of our Lord abideth for ever.

CHAPTER XVI

HOW A MAN SHALL STAND IN EVERYTHING DESIRABLE

Son, say thou at all times, Lord if it please thee, be this thus. Lord if this be to thy worship (honour) be this done in thy name. Lord, if thou see it be expedient and prove it profitable to me, grant me to use it to thy worship: but it thou know that it be noyous (harmful) to me or not available to the health of my soul take such a desire from me: for not every desire cometh of the Holy Ghost, yea, though it seem to man right and good.

It is hard to deem truly whether a good spirit or an evil stir thee to desire this or that, or whether thou be moved of thine own spirit. Many in the end be deceived, but in the beginning seemed brought in (endued) with a good spirit. Wherefore with dread of God and meekness of heart is to be desired and asked whatever desirable thing that cometh to mind principally; for with proper resignation all things are to be committed to me saying, Lord thou knowest how it is best: be it thus or thus as thou wilt and when thou wilt; give what thou wilt, how much thou wilt and when thou wilt. Do with me as thou wilt and as it most pleaseth thee and as it is most to thy honour. Put me where

thou wilt and do with me freely in all things. I am in thine hands: turn me and again turn me round about. Lo I am thy servant ready to all things: for I desire not to live to myself, but to thee, and that, would God, perfectly and worthily.

CHAPTER XVII

A PRAYER TO DO THE WILL OF GOD

Most benign Jesu, grant me thy grace, that it may be with me and labour with me and abide with me to the end. Grant me ever to do thy will and to desire that is most acceptable to thee and most dearly pleaseth thee. Thy will be my will and may my will ever follow thy will and accord (agree) to it in all wise. Be there to me one willing and one not willing with thee; and let me not will nor not will but what thou wilt or wilt not. Grant me to die from all things that are in this world, and for thee to love to be despised and not known in this world. Grant me above all things desired to rest in thee and to poise my soul in thee. Thou art very peace of heart, thou art only rest: without thee all things are hard and out of quiet. In this peace that is in the one sovereign everlasting good may I sleep and rest. Amen.

CHAPTER XVIII

THAT TRUE SOLACE IS TO BE SOUGHT IN GOD ALONE

WHATEVER I may think or desire to my solace I abide it not here but hereafter; so that if I alone had all the solaces of the world and might use all the delights it is certain that they may not endure

Wherefore my soul thou mayest not fully be comforted nor perfectly be refreshed but in God the consolation of poor, and the undertaker (supporter) of meek, men. Abide a little while, my soul; abide God's promise and thou shalt have abundance of all goods in heaven.

If thou covet then present things over inordinately thou shalt lose the everlasting heavenly things. Let temporal things be in use and everlasting things in desire. Thou mayest not be filled with no temporal good for thou wert not made to enjoy those.

Yea though thou hadst all goods that are made thou mayst not be blissful; but in God that made all things shall be thy bliss and thy felicity, not such as is seen and praised of foolish lovers of this world but such as good true Christian men abide and spiritual men foretaste whose conversation is in heaven.

Vain it is and short, all men's solace: but that is blissful solace and true that is perceived within from truth —the devout man beareth ever with him his comforter Jesu and saith to him, Be nigh to me Lord in every place and every time. Be this my consolation gladly to be willing to lack all man's solace. And if thy consolation fail thy will and just probation be to me as a sovereign solace; for thou shalt not perpetually be wroth nor thou shalt not threaten everlastingly.

CHAPTER XIX

THAT ALL BUSINESS IS TO BE SET IN GOD

My son, suffer me to do with thee what I will; I know what is most expedient to thee. Thou thinkest as a man, thou feelest in many things as man's affection persuadeth thee.

Lord, it is true that thou sayest. Thy business (care) is more for me than any care that I can bear (take) for myself. He standeth overcasually and like to fall that casteth not all his business into thee. So that my will be right and abide steadfast in thee do of me what pleaseth thee for it may not be but good whatever thou do of me.

If thou wilt that I be in darkness, blessed mayst thou be; and if thou wilt that I be in light, yet blessed mayst thou be. If thou vouch safe to comfort me, blessed mayst thou be; and if thou wilt that I be troubled, be thou ever alike blessed.

Son, so thou must stand, if thou desirest to go with me. Thou oughtest to be as ready to suffer as to joy. As gladly thou oughtest to be needy and poor as full and rich.

Lord I shall gladly suffer for thee whatever thou wilt shall come upon me. I will indifferently receive of thy hand good and evil, sweet and sour, glad and

sorrowful, and for all things that fall to me give thee thanks. Keep me from all manner of sin and I shall not dread death nor hell. While thou throw me not away for ever nor put me not out of the book of life, it shall not annoy me, whatever tribulation come to me.

CHAPTER XX

THAT TEMPORAL MISERIES ARE TO BE SUFFERED BY THE ENSAMPLE OF CHRIST

Son I came down from heaven for thy health: I took upon me thy miseries, not of need, but for charity for thou shouldst learn by patience to suffer temporal miseries not grudgingly (grumbling). For from the hour of my birth unto the day of my going out of this world on the cross there lacked me never suffering of sorrows.

I had great lack of temporal goods. I heard many complaints made of me, shames and reproofs I sustained benignly, for benefits I received unkindness, for miracles blasphemies, for teachings reprehensions and blame.

Lord as thou wert patient in thy life, therein fulfilling the commandment of thy father, it is worthy that I, most wretched sinner, after thy will should sustain myself patiently and that as long as thou wilt that I bear the burden of this corruptible life.

For if this life be onerous and heavy yet by thy grace it is full meritorious, and by thine ensample and the steps of thy deeds, it is to the feeble and the sick the more tolerable and the more clear; and much more consolatory than it was sometime in the old Law, when the gate of heaven was yet closed and also the way more dark; for as much as so few at

that time took any care to seek the realm of heaven. Neither good men that paid their debt by holy death might then enter into the realm of heaven (*i.e.* before Christ died).[1]

O how great thanks am I bound to yield to thee that hast vouch safed to show to me and to all Christian men the right way and the good way to thine everlasting realm.

Thy life is our way and by thine holy patience we go to thee that art our crown. If thou hadst not gone before and taught us the way who would have taken any care to have followed? Alas how many would have abode all afar and behind if they had not beheld thy clear ensample? Lo yet we wax luke (warm) hearing of so many signs and doctrines. What would fall (happen) if we had not so great a light to follow thee?

[1] This is only one of the many passages in which the translator has missed the meaning of the Latin.

CHAPTER XXI

OF SUFFERING OF WRONGS AND WHO IS PROVED VERY PATIENT

WHAT is it that thou speakest, son? Cease thy complaining, considering my passion and the passion of other saints: for thou hast not yet withstood unto shedding of thy blood. Little it is that thou sufferest in comparison of them that suffered so great things, so mightily tempted, so grievously troubled, so manifoldly proved and tried.

It behoveth thee therefore to bring to mind other grievous pains that thou mayst the more mightily and more easily bear thy small pains. And if they seem not little to thee be ware lest thine impatience cause that. Nevertheless whether they be small, whether they be great, study to suffer all patiently.

The better that thou disposest thyself to suffer, the more wisely thou dost, and the more thou deservest: and the more easily thou shalt bear it, thy heart and thy use (custom) made ready thereto not sluggishly. And say not "I may not suffer this of such a man" nor "I ought not to suffer such things for he did me great harm and put things upon me that I never thought, but of another I will gladly suffer whatever I shall suffer."

Such a thought is full foolish which considereth not the virtue of patience nor of whom she is to be crowned,

but taketh more heed of the persons and of the offences done to himself.

He is not very patient that will only suffer as much as he will: for the very patient taketh no heed whether he suffer of his prelate or of his peer or of his lover (friend); whether of a good man and an holy or whether he be tried by an overthwart (cross-grained) man and an unworthy; but, indifferently, whatever adversity and how oft it happeneth from any creature all that he taketh acceptably of the hand of God and accounteth that as a great gain: for nothing, be it never so little, so it be suffered for God, shall pass without merit. Wherefore be thou sped and ready for fighting if thou wilt have the victory. Without victory mayst thou not come to the crown of patience.

If thou wilt not suffer thou refusest to be crowned and if thou desire to be crowned fight manly, suffer patiently. Without labour men come not to rest nor without fighting men come not to victory.

Lord make possible by thy grace that which seemeth impossible by nature. Thou knowest, Lord, that I can suffer little and that I am soon thrown down with little adversity. Make Lord every trial of tribulation to me amiable and for thy name desirable: for to suffer and to be vexed for thee is full wholesome to my soul.

CHAPTER XXII

OF KNOWLEDGE OF OUR INFIRMITY AND OF MISERIES OF THIS LIFE

I SHALL acknowledge against myself my unrighteousness. I shall acknowledge to thee mine infirmity. Ofttimes a little thing throweth me down and maketh me sorry. I purpose to do mightily; but when a little temptation cometh, I am in great anguish. Otherwhiles, from things of little value riseth grievous temptation and while I ween myself somewhat sure, for I feel nothing (*i.e.* hurting me), I find myself ofttimes overcome through a light blast.

See therefore, Lord, my dejection and my frailty known to thee on every side. Have mercy on me (and snatch) me from the clay that I stick not therein nor abide dejected on every side. That it is which ofttimes rebuketh me before thee and confoundeth me that I am so sliding and so weak to withstand passions and though I fully not consent yet their vexation is grievous and heavy to me and it wearieth me so to live daily in strife.

And thereby is mine infirmity known to me that abominable fantasies come much lighter than they go away. Would God, thou most strong God of Israel, lover of true souls, that thou wouldst behold the labour and the sorrow of thy servant, and be assistant to him, to whatever things he goeth.

Strength me with heavenly might, lest the old man, the wretched flesh not yet fully subject to the spirit, have the better and the lordship, against which it behoveth to fight all the while men live in this life most wretched.

Alas, what a life is this where never lack tribulations and miseries where all things are full of gins and of enemies. For, one temptation or tribulation going away, another cometh; yea, sometime yet during the first conflict, other many come upon me unawares.

And how may a life be loved, having so many bitternesses, subject to so many miseries and mischances? how also is it called a life that engendereth so many deaths and pestilences and yet is loved and sought of many to have their delight therein.

The world is ofttimes reproved that it is false and vain and yet it is not lightly forsaken, for the lusts of the flesh have too great domination.

But some things draw men to love them, others to despise them. To love these draw, desire of the flesh, desire of eyes, and pride of life: but pains and miseries following bring forth hate of the world and weariness. But, alas, false delight overcometh the mind given to the world, and so she accounteth it a delight to be under the briars (*i.e.* pleasure) for the mind hath neither seen nor tasted the sweetness of God, nor the inward mirth of the soul.

But they that despise perfectly the world and study to live under holy discipline the sweetness of God that is promised to true lovers is not unknown to them and they see clearly how grievously the world erreth and how diversely it deceiveth.

CHAPTER XXIII

THAT MAN OUGHT TO REST IN GOD ABOVE ALL GIFTS

ABOVE all goods and in all, my soul, thou shalt rest in our Lord ever for he is (the) everlasting rest of saints.

Grant me most loving and most sweet Jesu above every creature, above all health and all beauty, above all glory and worship, above all might and dignity, above all cunning and subtlety, above all riches and craft, above all gladness and exaltation, above all fame and praise, above all hope and promise, above all merit and desire, above all gifts that thou mayst give or pour on me, above all joy or jubilation that mind may take or feel; further more above angels and archangels, above all the knighthood of heaven, above all things visible and invisible, and above all things that thou, my God, art not; for thou my God, art best above all;

Thou alone art highest, thou alone most mighty, thou alone most sufficient and most full, thou alone most sweet and most solacious, thou alone most fair and most lovely, thou alone most noble and most glorious above all things; in whom all goods are together and are perfectly and ever have been and shall be.

And therefore it is little and insufficient whatever thou givest me beside thyself or revealest or promisest

of thyself, thee not seen or gotten fully; for mine heart may not verily rest nor be fully and all wholly content, if it rest not in thee and ever pass thy gifts and every creature.

O my most sweet spouse Jhesu Christ, most pure lover, lord of all manner of creatures who shall give me feathers of very liberty that I may flee and rest in thee? O when shall it be given to me fully that I may take heed and see how sweet thou art, my Lord God? when shall I at full gather myself in thee that for thy love I feel not myself but thee only above all feeling and all manner, in a manner not known to all.

Now ofttimes I mourn and bear my infelicity with sorrow: for in this valley of tears there come many evil things that ofttimes let (hinder) me trouble me sore and dark my mind and distract me and draw me and wrap me in that I may not have free coming to thee and that I may not enjoy these jocund embraces that are ready for holy spirits.

My sighing and my manifold sorrow on earth must move thee, O Jhesu, the brightness of everlasting glory, comfort of the soul going in pilgrimage; before thee my mouth is without voice and my silence speaketh to thee. How long tarrieth my Lord ere he come?

Come to me, his poor servant, that he may make him glad; put (forth) his hand and deliver the wretch from all manner of anguish. Come, come; for without thee there shall be no blissful day nor hour; for thou art my gladness, and without thee my board is void.

I am a wretch and in a manner imprisoned and grievously afeard till thou refresh me with the light of thy presence and make me free and show me thy amiable visage. Let other men seek instead of thee what other things they like; for me—nothing pleaseth nor shall please but thou, my God, mine hope, and mine everlasting health.

I shall not hold my peace and I shall not cease to pray till thy grace turn again to me and thou speak within.

Lo, I am here; lo, I am come to thee, for thou calledst me inwardly; thy tears, the desire of thy soul, thine humiliation the contrition of thine heart they have bowed me and brought me to thee.

And I said—Lord I have called on thee inwardly and desired to have my joy in thee. I am ready to forsake all things for thee. Thou verily stirredst me first to seek thee. Wherefore, Lord, be thou blessed that hast done this goodness with thy servant after the multitude of thy mercy.

What hath thy servant more to say, Lord, before thee, but that he (should) meek himself greatly in thy sight having ever in mind his own wickedness and his vileness? for there is none like thee in all the innumerable things of heaven and earth.

Thy works are right good, thy judgments true, and by thy providence all things are governed. Praise therefore be to thee and glory, thou the wisdom of the father; my mouth, my soul and all things that are made, praise they thee and bless thee. Amen.

CHAPTER XXIV

OF RECORDING (REMEMBERING) THE MANIFOLD BENEFITS OF GOD

LORD open mine heart in thy law and teach me to go in thy precepts. Grant me to understand thy will and with great reverence and diligent consideration to remember thy benefits, both in general and special, that I may therefore worthily give thee thanks. But I know and acknowledge that I may not yield thee thanks for the least point. I am less than all thy goods given to me and when I think of thy noblesse, my spirit faileth for the greatness thereof.

All that we have in body and soul and all that we have outward or inward, naturally or supernaturally, all are thy benefits and commend thee as a benefactor holy and good of whom we have received all good things. And if one have taken more and another fewer, yet all are thine and without thee may not the least thing be had.

He that hath received greater may not rejoice him for his merit nor be lift up above other, nor despise the less; for he is more and better that less ascribeth to himself, and in thanking he is more meek and more devout. And he that weeneth himself to be more vile and deemeth himself more unworthy than all other, he is more apt (fit) to receive greater

'gifts. And he that taketh fewer, ought not to be sorry, nor bear indignation nor envy against the richer; but rather to take heed of thee and praise thy goodness sovereignly, that so plenteously, so freely, so gladly, granteth thy gifts without acceptance of persons.

All things came of thee and therefore thou art to be praised in all things. Thou knowest what is expedient to be given to everybody and why this hath more and this less; it is not for us to discern but for thee anenst (with) whom the merits of all are defined.

Wherefore, Lord God, I account it for a great benefit that I have not many things the praise and glory of which appear outwardly and according to man. So that a creature, the poverty and vileness of his person considered, should not conceive thereof heaviness, sorrow or dejection but rather consolation and great gladness; for thou God chosest in this world poor and meek (men) and despised of the world to (be) thy familiars and household men.

Witness hereof are thine apostles whom thou madest princes above all the earth. They were conversant (living) in the world without complaint, meek and simple, without all malice and guile, in so much that they joyed to suffer rebukes and wrongs for thy name and what the world abhorreth, that they embraced to them with great will(ingness).

Wherefore nothing ought so to make glad thy lover and the knower of thy benefits as thy will in him and the well-pleasing of thine everlasting disposition; with which only he ought to be content and comforted, so that he will be least as gladly as another

will be most and as well pleased and content in the lower place as in the first and as gladly despicable and abject and of no fame as to be more worshipful and greater in the world than other. For thy will and the love of thy honour ought to pass all things and to comfort him more and please him more than all benefits given him or to be given him.

CHAPTER XXV

OF FOUR THINGS BRINGING GREAT PEACE

SON now shall I teach thee the way of peace and of very liberty

Lord, do as thou sayest for that is agreeable to me to hear.

Study, son, rather to do the will of another than thine own. Choose evermore rather to have less than more. Seek ever the lower place and to be under all. Desire ever to pray that the will of God be all and wholly done. Lo, such a man entereth into the coasts of peace and quiet.

Lord, this word of thine is greatly short but it containeth in itself much perfection. It is little in saying but full of wit and plenteous of fruit. And if this might be truly kept by me a light disturbance should not so soon spring up in me; and as oftimes as I feel me unpleased and grieved I find that I have gone from this doctrine. But thou canst (do) all things and ever lovest the profiting of man's soul. Increase in me more grace that I may fulfil thy word and make perfect mine own health.

CHAPTER XXVI

AGAINST EVIL THOUGHTS

My Lord God be not eloyned (distant) from me: my God, behold mine health: for vain thoughts and dreads have risen against me, tormenting my soul. How shall I escape unhurt? how shall I break them? I shall go before thee, he saith, and I shall make low the glorious of the earth: I shall open the gate of the prison and I shall reveal to thee the inward of my secrets. Do, Lord, as thou speakest, and make to flee from thy visage all wicked thoughts. This is mine hope and my sole consolation to flee to thee in every tribulation, to trust to thee and inwardly to call upon thee and patiently to abide thy consolation.

CHAPTER XXVII

A PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION OF MIND

CLARIFY me with thy clearness of everlasting light and bring out of the habitat of mine heart all manner of darkness. Restrain all evil wanderings and all mighty temptations. Fight for me mightily and bear (drive) out the wicked beasts, the perilous lusts, I mean; that peace be made in thy virtue and might and abundance of praise sound in the holy hall, that is in the pure conscience. Command winds and tempests, say to the sea Be in rest, and to the northern wind Blow not, and there shall be great tranquillity. Send out thy light and thy truth, that they may shine upon the earth; for I am idle earth and void, till thou illumine me. Pour out thy grace from above, wash my soul with that heavenly dew, minister waters of devotion to water the face of the earth, to bring forth good fruit and of the best. Lift up the mind that is pressed with the heavy burden of sin, and suspend all my desire to heavenly things; that the sweetness of thy felicity once tasted, it may not like me to think on earthly things. Tear me and deliver from all passing comfort of creatures, for nothing created may fully quiet and comfort my appetite. Join me to thee with an undepartable bond of love, for thou alone sufficest to the lover and without thee all things are frivols (frivolous).

CHAPTER XXVIII

OF ESCHEWING CURIOUS INQUISITION OF ANOTHER MAN'S LIFE

Son be not curious, nor be busy. What is this or that to thee? Follow thou me. What is it to thee whether a man be such and such or what this man doth or what he saith? Thou hast no need to answer for others, but for thyself thou must yield accounts. Whereto wrappest thou and impliest (implicatest) thyself? Lo, I know all men and see all things that are done under heaven and know how it standeth with every man, what he thinketh, what he will, and to what end his intention draweth. Wherefore—to me all things are to be committed.

Keep thou thyself in good peace and let the stirrer stir as much as he will, whatever he doth or saith shall fall upon him for he may not deceive me. Take no heed of the shadow of a great name nor of the familiarity of many nor of private love of man; for all these engender distraction and great darkness of soul. I would gladly speak my word and show thee hid things if thou wouldst diligently observe my coming and open to me the door of thy heart.

Be ready, wake (watch) in prayer and in all things meek thyself.

CHAPTER XXIX

WHEREIN STANDETH PEACE OF HEART AND TRUE PROFITING

Son, I said, I leave peace to you, I give my peace to you; not as the world giveth so give I. All men desire but all men love not those things that long (belong) to true peace. My peace is with meek men and mild of heart: thy peace shall be in much patience. If thou hear me and follow my voice thou shalt live in great peace.

What shall I do therefore?

In everything take heed what thou dost and what thou sayest and dress (direct) all thine intention to please me alone, and out of me (outside me) covet nothing nor seek nothing. And also of other men's deeds deem nothing rashly nor meddle not nor imply (implicate) thee not with things that art not committed to thee and it shall be trouble to thee little or seldom. For a man never to feel trouble nor suffer no heaviness in body nor in soul, is not the state of this world but the state of everlasting quiet.

Wherefore deem not to have found true peace if thou feel no grief, nor then all to be well if thou have no adversary; nor (deem) thyself to be perfect if all things be after thy will. Nor then account thee great or specially beloved if thou be in great delight, devotion or sweetness for herein is not

known a true lover of virtue nor in them profit and man's perfection stand.

Wherein then, Lord?

In offering thyself with all thine heart to the will of God, not asking those things that art thine neither in little, nor in much, nor in time nor in everlastingness. So that with one even cheer (face) thou abide in yielding of thanks—among pleasant things and contrarious, peising (weighing) all evenly.

If thou art so mighty and so long-abiding-in-hope that, all manner of inward consolation withdrawn, yet thou makest ready thine heart to suffer greater things and more, and dost not justify thyself as though thou oughtest not to suffer so great things but justifiest me in all my dispositions and praisest me as most holy; then thou goest in the true and right way of peace and thou mayst hope certainly to see my face in jubilation. And if thou wouldst come to full contempt of thyself, know that thou shalt then enjoy abundance of peace after the possibility of thy dwelling place.

CHAPTER XXX

OF THE EXCELLENCE OF A FREE MIND AND HOW IT IS RATHER GOTTEN BY PRAYER THAN BY READING

LORD, this is the work of a perfect man, never to release the soul from intention of holy things, and among many cares to go in a manner without care, not for sluggishness, but in a kind of right of a free mind in cleaving to no creature in inordinate affection.

I beseech thee, my most merciful God, preserve me from the cares of this world, that I be not too much implied (implicated); from many necessities of the body that I be not taken with pleasures; from all obstacles of the soul, that I be not broken and thrown down with heaviness. I say not only from such things as the vanity of the world coveteth with whole affection but also from these miseries that punishingly grieve the soul of thy servant with the common curse of mortality and tarry (hinder) it that it may not enter into liberty of spirit as oft as I would.

O my God, ineffable sweetness, turn into bitterness all fleshly comfort that draweth me away from love of everlasting things and wickedly draweth me to itself under colour of a present delightful good. My God let not flesh and blood overcome me, let not the world deceive me and his short glory, let

not the fiend with his wiles supplant me. Give me strength to withstand, patience in suffering, constancy in persevering, give for all worldly consolations the most sweet unction of the Holy Ghost, and for fleshly love pour into me the love of thy name.

Lo, meat and drink, clothe and other things belonging to the body are onerous to a fervent spirit. Grant me to use such nourishings temperately, and not to be wrapped too much in desires. To cast all things away is not lawful, for nature must be sustained, but to seek superfluities and such things as most delight, holy law forbiddeth; for else the flesh would wanton against the spirit. In these things I pray that thine hand may govern me and teach me what is too much.

CHAPTER XXXI

THAT PRIVATE LOVE MOST TARRIETH A MAN FROM THE HIGHEST GOOD

Son, it behoveth thee to give all for all and for nothing of thine to be to thyself. Know well that love of thyself noyeth thee more than anything in the world. According to the love and affection that thou bearest, everything cleaveth to thee more or less. If thy love be pure, simple and ordinate thou shalt not be captive nor subject to earthly things. Covet not that thing that thou mayst not have; will not to have that thing that may let (hinder) thee and prive thee of thine inward liberty

It is wonder that thou committest not thyself to me from the ground of thine heart with all things that thou mayst desire or have. Why art thou consumed with vain mourning? Why art thou made weary with superfluous cares? Stand at my well-pleasing and thou shalt suffer no hindering. If thou seek this or that or would be here or there for thine own profit and for thy more plesance thou shalt never be in quiet nor free from business: for in everything shall be some default and in every place shall be that that is contrary.

Therefore not everything gotten and multiplied from without helpeth but rather when it is set at naught and cut away by the root; which is not only

understood of money and riches, but of ambition, of honour and desire of vain praise; the which all pass with the world.

The place wardeth but little if thou lack a fervent spirit; nor shall that peace long stand that is sought from without if the state of the heart be vacant of a right foundation; that is, unless thou stand in me thou mayst change but not do better. For, occasion once arisen and taken, thou shalt find that which thou fleddest and more thereto.

CHAPTER XXXII

A PRAYER FOR PURGATION OF HEART AND HEAVENLY WISDOM

CONFIRM me, God, by the grace of the Holy Ghost: and make virtue to be strengthened in the inner man, and make mine heart void from all unprofitable business; not drawn with diverse desires of anything vile or precious but beholding all things as things passing—and me together with them. For there is nothing abiding under the sun where all things are vanity and affliction of spirit.

O how wise is he that thus considereth. Lord, give me heavenly wisdom that I may learn to seek thee and find thee above all things and above all things to savour thee and love thee and according to the order of wisdom to understand all other things as they be. Grant me prudently to decline the flatterer and patiently to suffer the adversary; for this is great wisdom not to be moved with every wind of words nor to give the ear to evil-blandishing mermaiden; and thus men go surely in the way begun.

CHAPTER XXXIII

AGAINST THE TONGUES OF DETRACTORS

Son, bear it not heavily, if some feel evil of thee and say that thou wouldst not gladly hear. Thou oughtest to feel of thyself worse things and to believe no man to be lower than thyself. If thou walk within, thou shalt not peise (weigh) flying words. It is no little prudence to keep silence in evil time and to turn inwardly to me and not to be troubled with man's judgment. Let not thy peace be in the mouths of men; whether they say well, whether they say evil, thou art not therefore another man. Where is very peace and very glory? Whether not in me? And he that coveteth not to please men nor dreadeth not to displease men, he shall rejoice in much peace. Of inordinate love and vain dread groweth all unrestfulness of heart and distraction of wits.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THAT IN TIME OF TRIBULATION GOD IS INWARDLY TO BE CALLED UPON AND TO BE BLESSED

LORD be thy name blessed for ever that wouldest this temptation to come upon me. I may not flee it. I pray thee help me and turn it to me into good. Lord now I am in tribulation and it is not well in mine heart, but I am greatly vexed with this present passion. And now, well beloved father, what shall I say? I am taken among anguishes. Save me in this hour. But therefore I come into this hour that thou shouldst be glorified when I shall be brought down low and by thee delivered. Please it thee, Lord, to deliver me, for I am poor and what shall I do and whither shall I go without thee?

Lord, give peace at this time; help me my Lord God and I shall not dread how much ever I be grieved. And now in this what shall I say? Lord, thy will be done and I have well deserved to be troubled and grieved. It is behoveful also that I suffer and, would God, patiently, till this tempest pass and better be.

Thine almighty hand is of power to take away this temptation from me, and to assuage his violence that I be not utterly overcome, as thou hast done ofttimes with me, my God, my mercy; and the harder that it is to me, the lighter it is to thee, this change of the right hand of the highest.

CHAPTER XXXV

OF ASKING OF GOD'S HELP AND TRUST IN RECOVERING GRACE

SON, I am the Lord comforting in the day of tribulation. Come to me when it is not well with thee. This it is that letteth (hindereth) most heavenly comfort for thou hast so late recourse to prayer, for before thou prayest me heartily thou seekest mean time many solaces and refreshest thee in outward things. And there-through it cometh that all availeth but little till thou take heed that I it am that deliver men trusting in me, nor without me is any availing, help, or profitable counsel or durable remedy.

But now taking again spirit after tempest wax strong in the light of my pity; for I am nigh, saith scripture, to restore all things, not only wholly, but abundantly and overheaped. Whether is there anything hard to me or shall I be like a man that saith and doth not? Where is thy faith? stand steadfastly and perseveringly. Be of long hope and a strong man; consolation shall come to thee in time. Abide me and I shall come and cure thee.

It is a temptation that vexeth thee and a vain dread that feareth (frighteth) thee. What mattereth busy caring of things that are contingently to come, but to make thee have sorrow upon sorrow? Let the malice of the day suffice to it. Vain it is and un-

'profitable for a man to be troubled or rejoiced of things to come that peradventure shall never fall. But it is man's condition to be deluded with such imaginations and a sign of a soul as yet little, to be drawn so lightly at the suggestion of the enemy. For he taketh no heed whether he delude or deceive by true or by false whether he throw down by loss of things present or dread of things to come.

Let not thine heart therefore be troubled nor dread such. Believe in me and have trust in my mercy. When thou weenest ofttimes that I am far from thee then am I next. When thou weenest thyself almost lost then ofttimes cometh greatest gain of merit.

It is not then all lost when the thing falleth into the contrary. Thou oughtest not to deem after the present feeling nor so to cleave to any heaviness where ever it come from and take her so as though hope of scaping were utterly taken away.

Ween not thyself to be all forsaken though I send thee some tribulation for a time or else withdraw desired consolation; for so men go to the realm of heaven. And without doubt it is more expedient to thee and to the remnant of my servants that ye be exercised with contrary things than if all things fell after your liking.

Lo, I know hid thoughts that it is greatly expedient for thine health that thou be left some time without savour lest thou be lift up in the succeeding of thy desire and please thyself in that thou art not. That I gave I may take away and restore it again when it pleaseth me. When I give it, it is mine; when I withdraw it, I take not thine, for mine is every good thing given and every perfect gift.

If I send thee any heaviness or any contrariousness, have no indignation thereof, nor let not thine heart fall, for lo, I may soon lift thee up again and change every heaviness into joy. Nevertheless I am righteous and commendable when I do so with thee.

If thou savour aright and behold truly, thou oughtest never for adversity to sorrow so deeply but rather to joy and give thanks, yea, to account this as for a singular joy that I paining thee with sorrows spare thee not

" As the father loved me, so I love you " said I to my well beloved disciples whom I send not to temporal joys but to despites, not to idleness but to labours, not to rest but to bring forth much fruit in patience.

CHAPTER XXXVI

OF RECKING NEVER OF ALL CREATURES SO THE CREATOR MAY BE FOUND

LORD I need yet more grace if I shall come thither where no man nor other creature may let (hinder) me. For as long as any thing withholdeth me, I may not flee freely to thee. He desired to flee freely that said "Who shall give me feathers as a culver and I shall flee and rest?" What is more restful than a simple eye? and what is more free than he that desireth naught on earth?

It behoveth therefore to pass over every creature and to forsake oneself perfectly and to stand in extasy of mind and see thee creator of all to be nothing like his creatures. And unless a man be sped (freed) from all creatures he may never freely attend to godly things.

Therefore there are found but few contemplative men for few can fully sequester and depart themselves from perishing creatures. Therefore great grace is required thereto that may lift up the soul and ravish herself above herself. And save a man be lift up in spirit and delivered from all creatures and all wholly oned (united) to God, whatever he can (knoweth), whatever he have, it is of little weight.

He shall long be little and shall lie beneath that ac-

counteth anything great but only one, that is without measure, everlasting good: and all save that is naught and for naught to be accounted. There is a great difference between him that is illumined with wisdom and a devout man and him that is lettered and studious in science called a clerk. That doctrine is much more noble that welleth from above of God's influence than that that is laboriously gotten by man's wit.

There are many desirers of contemplation; but they study not to practise the things that are required thereto. It is a great let (hindrance) that men abide in signs and sensible things and take little care of perfect mortification. I know not what it is nor what spirit we be led with nor what we mean, we that are called spiritual men, that we have so much labour and so much business about transitory things and vile things but of our inwards (inward things) we think full seldom, gathering our wits together.

Alas, anon after a little recollection we break out and we weigh not our works with a strait examination. Where our affections lie we take no heed and how impure all our works are, this we bewail not. Every flesh had corrupt his way and therefore followed the great flood. Wherefore when our inward affection is much corrupt it must needs be that the following action, showing the lacking of inward strength, be corrupt also.

Of a pure heart proceedeth fruit of good life. Men seek how much a man hath, but of how much good he doth no man thinketh. It is inquired if he be mighty, rich, fair, able, or a good writer, a good

singer, a good labourer, but how pure he be in spirit, how patient, how mild, how devout and how inward, not many men speak. Nature beholdeth the outward things of man, but grace turneth itself all inward. Nature is ofttimes deceived, but grace trusteth in God, that she be not deceived.

CHAPTER XXXVII

OF DENYING ONESELF AND FORSAKING OF ALL CUPIDITY

SON, thou mayst not have perfect liberty unless thou deny thyself utterly. All lovers of themselves, covetous, curious, wanderers about (are fettered), seeking ever soft things and not those things that are of Jhesu Christ but ofttimes feigning and shaping what may not stand. Hold a short and perfect saying—Leave all and thou shalt find all; forsake coveting and thou shalt find rest. Think this over in thy mind and when thou hast fulfilled it thou shalt understand all things

Lord this is not one day's work nor children's play; but, what is more, in this short word is included all perfection of Religious folk.

Son, thou oughtest not to be turned away nor anon to be all thrown down when thou hearest the way of perfectness, but rather to be provoked to higher things and at least to aspire thereto by desire. Would God it were so with thee and that thou wert come thereto, that thou wert no lover of thyself but stoodest purely at my beckoning and of him that I have put above thee as father. Then shouldst thou please me greatly and thy days should pass with great joy and in great peace. Thou hast many things yet to forsake the which unless thou resign them wholly to me, thou shalt not get that

thou askest. Wherefore I make persuasion to thee to buy gold of me that thou mayst be made rich, that is, heavenly wisdom treading under foot all these low things.

Put behind (thee) all earthly wisdom and all thine own complacency. I have said to thee to buy vile things and of little price instead of things precious in man's reputation. For true and heavenly wisdom seemeth little and of no price and almost forgotten in this world, not thinking highly of itself nor seeking to be magnified on earth. Many preach with the mouth but in living they depart far therefrom. Nevertheless it is a precious margaret (pearl) and hid from many.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

OF UNSTABLENESS OF HEART AND OF INTENTION TO BE HAD TOWARDS GOD

Son, believe not thine own affection that now is for it shall soon be changed into another. As long as thou livest thou art subject to mutability, yea, though thou wilt not; so thou shalt be found now glad, now sorry, now pleased, now troubled, now devout, now indevout, now studious, now sluggish, now heavy, now light.

But above these changes standeth the wise man and well taught in spirit, taking no heed what he feels in himself, nor on which side the wind of unstableness bloweth, but that all the intention of his mind may profit to the due and best end. For so he may abide one and the same unshaken, with the simple eye of intention directed to me without ceasing among so many divers chances. For the more pure that the eye of intention is, the more steadfastly men go among divers storms.

But in many the eye of intention is darked, for anon they behold a delightful thing that appeareth and seldom is any found free from the venom of self-seeking. So the Jews sometime came into Bethany to Martha and Mary not for Jhesu alone but for they would see Lazarus. Wherefore the eye of intention must be cleansed that it be simple and for the right and directed to me alone above all variant things that are between.

CHAPTER XXXIX

TO HIM THAT LOVETH, GOD SAVOURETH ABOVE ALL THINGS

Lo my God and all. What would I more and what more blissful thing may I desire? O the savoury and the sweet word, to him that loveth the word of the father, not the world nor that that longeth to it.

Lo my God and all: To him that understandeth there is said enough and oft to rehearse it is jocund for the lover. Certainly, thou being present, all things are jocund and thou being absent all things are loth and weary. Thou makest in the heart tranquillity, great peace and solemn gladness.

Thou makest (man) to feel well of all and in all things to praise thee nor may there nothing long please without thee; but if anything is to be acceptable and savour well it behoveth that thy grace shall be nigh and make it savoury with the sauce of thy wisdom. To whom thou savourest, what shall not savour to him aright? and to whom thou savourest not, what thing may turn him to mirth?

But the worldly wise men fail in thy wisdom and they that savour the flesh; for there is much vanity and there is found death. But they that by despising of earthly things and mortification of the flesh follow thee be known verily to be wise men, for they are translate from vanity to verity

and from the flesh to the spirit. To these men God savoureth; and whatever of good they find in creatures all that they refer to the praise of their maker. Unlike nevertheless, much unlike is the savour of the creator and of the creature, of everlastingness and of time, of light uncreate and light illuminate.

O thou light perpetual, passing all lights created, cast thou from above lightning, piercing all the inwards of my heart. Purify, make glad, quicken and clarify my spirit with its powers to cleave to thee in jubilant excess. O when shall that blessed and desirable hour come when thou wilt fill me with thy presence and thou shalt be all in all. As long as this is not given, there shall be no full joy.

Alas, yet liveth in me the old man; he is not all crucified, he is not perfectly all dead: yet he coveteth against the spirit and moveth inward battles and suffereth not the realm of the soul to be in quiet. But thou that hast lordship over the power of the sea and suagest the movings of his floods, arise and help me; bring to naught folks that will have battles. Knock them down in thy might and show thy greatness and be thy right hand glorified: for there is to me none other hope nor refuge but in thee, my Lord God.

CHAPTER XL

THAT THERE IS NO SURETY FROM TEMPTATION IN THIS LIFE

SON, thou art never sure in this life; but as long as thou livest, ever spiritual armour is necessary to thee. Thou dwellest among enemies, thou art impugned on the right hand and on the left hand. Wherefore if thou use not on every side the shield of patience thou shalt not be long without a wound.

Furthermore if thou set not thine heart fixed and firm in me with will to suffer for me thou shalt not be able to suffer this burning nor come to the victory of saints. It behoveth thee therefore to pass (by) all things manly and to use a mighty hand against things set against thee; for to the victor is given manna and to the coward is left much misery.

If thou seek rest in this world how shalt thou then come to rest everlasting? Set not thyself to (gain) great rest but to (gain) much patience. Seek very peace not in earth but in heaven, not in men nor in other creatures but in God alone.

For the love of God thou oughtest to suffer all things: labours and sorrows, temptations, vexations, anxieties, necessities, infirmities, wrongs, obloquy, reprehensions, humiliations, confusions, corrections, and despites. These things help to virtue, these

prove the knight of Christ, these make the heavenly crown.

I shall give everlasting meed for a little labour and infinite glory for a transitory shame. Weenest thou to have at all times spiritual consolations at thy will? My saints had not so, but many heavinesses, diverse temptation and great desolations; but they bore themselves in all things patiently and trusted more to God than to themselves knowing that passions (sufferings) of this time are not worthy to deserve the glory that is to come.

Wilt thou have anon that that many men could scarce get after many tears and great labours? Abide the Lord, do manly and be comforted, and mistrust not nor go away, but constantly put forth both body and soul for the glory of God; and I shall give again most fully, I shall be with thee in every tribulation.

CHAPTER XLI

AGAINST MEN'S VAIN JUDGMENTS

Son cast thine heart on to our Lord steadfastly and dread no man's judgment where thy conscience declareth thee pure and innocent. It is good and blissful for a man so to suffer; nor shall that be grievous to him that is meek in heart, trusting to God more than to himself.

Many men speak many things and to them little faith is to be given. And to please all men is not possible; for though Paul studied to please all men in our Lord and was made all things to all men nevertheless he accounted it for the least thing to be deemed (well) by man's sight. He did enough for man's edification and health, as much as in him was or he might do; but he could not let (hinder) that sometimes he should be deemed (judged) and despised of others.

Therefore he committed all to God that knew all things and defended himself with patience and meekness against the mouths of wicked speakers and of them that think vain things and lies and make boast at their own will. Nevertheless other whiles he answered lest by his silence occasion of offending might have been given to the feeble in faith.

What art thou that dreadest so much of a mortal man that this day is and to-morrow appeareth not?

Dread God and be not afeard of man's dreads. What may any man do against thee with wrongs or with words? he noyeth more himself than thee, whatever he be. Have thou God ever before thine eyes and strive not with brawling words.

And if thou for the time seemest to have the worse and to suffer shame that thou hast not deserved, grudge (grumble) not therefore, nor lose not thy crown by impatience but rather look up to me in heaven that am mighty to deliver from all confusion and wrong and to yield to every man after his works.

CHAPTER XLII

OF PURE RESIGNATION OF A MAN'S SELF

SON, forsake thyself and thou shalt find me. Stand without choice and without all manner of self and thou shalt win ever; for anon, as thou hast resigned thyself and not taken thyself again, then shall be thrown to thee more grace.

Lord, how oft shall I resign myself and wherein shall I forsake myself?

Ever and in every hour, as in little, so in great. I out-take (except) nothing but in all things I will find thee made bare: else, how canst thou be mine and I thine, unless thou be deprived outwardly and inwardly from all thine own will? The more swiftly that thou dost this the better it shall be with thee; and the more plainly and clearly it is done the more shalt thou please me and the more thou shalt win.

Some resign, but with some exception, for they trust not fully to God; wherefore they labour to provide for themselves. Some also first offer all but afterwards through a little temptation they go again to their own selves and therefore profit not in virtue. Then folk come not to true liberty of heart, nor to the grace of my jocund familiarity except with whole resignation and daily offering of themselves

first being made, without which unity of fruition (pure enjoyment) standeth not, nor shall stand.

I have said to thee full oft, and yet I say again: Forsake thyself, resign of thyself and thou shalt enjoy great peace. Give all for all, seek nothing, ask nothing again; stand purely and undoubtingly in me and thou shalt have me; thou shalt be free in heart and darkness shall not over go (overwhelm) thee. To this enforce thyself, this pray thou, this desire thou, that thou may be despoiled on all manner of self, and thou, bare, follow bare Jhesu (Jesus only) and die to thyself and live everlastingly to me. Then shall end all vain fantasies, wicked conturbations and superfluous cares; then also shall go away inordinate dread and inordinate love shall die.

CHAPTER XLIII

OF GOOD GOVERNANCE IN OUTWARD THINGS

Son, thou oughtest diligently to attend to this that in every place, every action or outward occupation thou be inwardly free and mighty in thyself and all things be under thee and thou not under them, that thou be lord and governor of thy deeds not servant, but rather exempt and a true Hebrew going in to the lot and liberty of the sons of God that stand upon these present goods and behold the everlasting that behold things transitory with the left eye and heavenly things with the right eye: whom temporal things draw not (them) to cleave to them but they rather draw such goods to serve God well with as they are ordained of God and instituted of the sovereign workman that leaveth nothing inordinate (unordered) in his creation.

Also if thou in every chance standest not in outward appearance nor with the fleshly eye turnest about to things seen or heard but anon in every cause thou enterest with Moses to ask counsel of our Lord, thou shalt hear ofttimes God's answer and thou shalt come again instructed in things present and that are to come.

Moses at all times had recourse to the tabernacle for doubts and questions to be assoiled and fled to the help of prayer for relieving of perils and for mischiefs

of men. So thou oughtest to fly into the secret place of thine heart beseeching inwardly the help of God. For Joshua and the children of Israel, as it is read, were deceived of the Gibeonites, for they asked no counsel first of our Lord but giving too much credence to sweet words were deluded with a false pity.

CHAPTER XLIV

THAT MAN BE NOT TOO BUSY IN WORLDLY BUSINESS

Son at all times commit to me thy cause for I shall dispose it well in convenient time. Abide mine ordinance thou shalt feel profit thereof

Lord, right gladly I commit to thee all things for little may my thinking profit. Would God that I cleaved not over much to chances that are to come that I might offer myself to thy well-pleasing without tarrying.

Son, ofttimes a man is sore moved about a thing that he desireth; but when he is come to it, he beginneth to feel otherwise; for affections are not abiding about one thing but they be shufted from one to another. It is not therefore a little thing, yea, it is not among least things for a man to forsake himself; true profit is denying of a man's self and a man so denied is full free and full sure. But the old enemy, adversary to all good, ceaseth not from temptation but day and night he lieth in a wait if he may bring headily (headlong) the unware man into the snare of deceit.

Work therefore and pray, saith our Lord, that ye enter not into temptation.

CHAPTER XLV

THAT A MAN HATH NO GOOD OF HIMSELF WHEREOF TO REJOICE

LORD what is man that thou hast mind on him or the son of man that thou visitest him? What deserved man that thou shouldst give him thy grace? Lord, why may I complain if thou forsake me or what can I righteously pretend against thee if thou do not that I ask? Certainly this may I think in truth and say: Lord, I am naught, I can naught, I have no good of myself but in all things I fail and ever tend to naught. And unless I be helpen (helped) of thee and inwardly informed I am made all luke(warm) and dissolute.

But thou Lord art ever one and abidest one everlastingly, ever God, righteous and holy, doing all things by wisdom. But I that am more prone to failing than to profit am not ever abiding in the same estate, for seven times change upon me. Nevertheless it is soon amended when it pleaseth thee to put to an helping hand; for thou alone without all man's succour mayst help and confirm me in such wise that my cheer (face) may no more be changed diversely but that in thee alone my heart may turn and be at rest.

Wherefore if I could well cast away all man's consolation either for getting of devotion or for necessity

' compelling me to seek thee—for there is no man that can comfort me—then might I worthily trust in thy grace and rejoice in the gift of new consolation.

Thanks be to thee whereof all cometh, as oft as it is well with me. For I am vanity and naught before thee, a man inconstant and sick; wherein therefore may I rejoice or why covet I to be held in reputation? Is it not of naught and a most vain thing? Verily vainglory is an evil pestilence and the greatest vanity, for it draweth away from true glory and despoileth (man) of heavenly grace. For while a man pleaseth himself, he displeaseth thee; and while he gapeth after man's praises he is deprived of true virtues.

For true glory and holy exultation is to rejoice in thee and not in oneself, to joy in thy name and not in man's own virtue, and to delight in no creature save for thee. Praised be therefore thy name, not mine; magnified be thy work and not mine; blessed be thine holy name, but to me be nothing given of man's praises.

Thou art my glory, thou art the exultation of my heart. In thee shall I rejoice and joy all day, for myself not at all, save in my infirmities. Let the Jews seek glory each of the other, I shall seek that that is of God alone, for all man's glory, all temporal worship (honour), all worldly height, compared to thine everlasting glory is vanity and folly. O my truth and my mercy, my God, blessed trinity, to thee alone be praise and honour virtue and glory through worlds infinite. Amen.

CHAPTER XLVI

OF CONTEMPT OF ALL HONOUR

Son, if thou see other men honoured take no such thing to thyself but rather be despised and made low. Lift up thine heart to me in heaven and men's despising on earth shall not make thee sorry.

Lord, we be in blindness and some are deceived of vanity. Lord, if I behold me aright there was never wrong done to me by no creature; wherefore of right I have nothing to complain of against thee. Forasmuch as I have oft and grievously offended thee, rightly is every creature armed against me.

To me therefore is due confusion and despite but to thee praise honour and glory. And unless I make myself ready to this that I will gladly be despised of every creature and forsaken and utterly seem naught I may not be inwardly peaced (at peace) and stablished, nor spiritually be illumined nor fully oned (united) to thee.

CHAPTER XLVII

THAT PEACE IS NOT TO BE SET (PUT) IN MEN

SON, if thou set (put) thy peace in any person for thine own feeling and living together (with them) thou shalt be unstable and unpeaced (not at peace). But if thou have recourse to the truth living and abiding, the friend that goeth from thee or dieth from thee shall not make thee sorry. In me ought to stand the love of the friend and whoever seemeth good to thee and dear in this life is to be beloved—for me.

Without me friendship is not worth and may not endure: and the love is not very true or pure that I couple not. Thou oughtest to be so dead from such affections of men beloved, as in thee is; thou shouldest will to be without man's fellowship. The further that a man goeth from all earthly solace, the more he nigheth unto God. Also the more profoundly that a man goeth down into himself and waxeth vile to himself the higher he styeth (climbeth) up to God.

He that ascribeth any good to himself, be letteth (hindreth) the coming of the grace of God into him, for the grace of the Holy Ghost seeketh ever the meek heart. If thou couldest perfectly make thyself naught and void (empty) thyself from all love of creatures then should I well into thee with

great grace. When thou lookest to creatures thine affection is withdrawn from the creator.

Learn in all things to overcome thyself for thy creator and thou shalt then be able to attain to the knowledge of God. How little ever it be that is beheld and loved inordinately, it tarrieth (keepeth men) from the highest love and draweth (them) into wickedness.

CHAPTER XLVIII

AGAINST VAIN AND SECULAR KNOWLEDGE

Son, let not the fair and the subtle sayings of men move thee for the realm of God is not in word but in virtue. Take heed to my words the which set hearts afire and illuminate minds, bring in compunction and manifold consolations. Read never anything for thee to seem better taught or wiser. Study for mortification of sins and vices for that shall avail thee more than the knowledge of many hard questions. When thou hast read and known many things, it behoveth ever to have recourse to one principal thing

I am he that teacheth man cunning and I grant to meek men more clear understanding than may be taught of man. He to whom I speak shall soon be wise for he shall greatly profit in spirit. Woe to them that inquire many curious things of men but of the way to serve me care but little. Time shall come when there shall appear the Master of masters, Christ Jhesu, to hear the lesson of all angels, that is to search the consciences of all men: and then shall Jerusalem be searched with lanterns and then shall be open the hidils (secrets) of darkness and then shall arguments of tongues be at peace.

I it am that in a point lift up the meek soul so that he shall take (understand) my reasons of everlasting

truth more than though he had studied ten years in schools. So I teach without noise of words, without confusion of opinions, without desire of honour, without fighting of arguments.

I it am that teach to despise earthly things, to be weary of things present, to seek heavenly things, to savour things everlasting, to flee honours, to suffer slanders, to put all whole trust in me and covet nothing outside me and above all things to love me burningly.

A certain man in loving me entirely learned godly things and spake marvels; he profited more in forsaking all things than in studying of subtleties. But to some I speak common things, to some special, to some I appear surely in signs and figures, and to some I reveal mysteries in a great light.

There is one voice of the books but it informeth (men) not alike: for I am the teacher of truth within, searcher of the heart, understander of the thoughts, promoter of the works, dealing to every man as I deem worthy.

CHAPTER XLIX

OF NOT ATTRACTING OUTWARD THINGS TO A MAN

Son, in many things suppose thyself as dead upon the earth and one to whom all the world is crucified; and many things thou must pass over with a deaf ear and think rather on those things that belong unto thy peace. It is more profitable to turn away thine eye from things that displease and to leave to every man his own feeling than to strive with contentious words. If thou stand well with God and behold his judgment thou shalt bear it the more easily if thou be overcome.

O Lord whither are we come? Lo, temporal harm is sorrowed for, men labour and run for little getting and spiritual harm is forgotten and scarcely and late cometh to mind again. That that availeth little or naught is taken heed to and that that is sovereignly necessary is negligently passed over; for man floweth out all to outer things and unless he turn again soon, gladly he lieth and resteth in outer things.

CHAPTER L

THAT IT IS NOT RIGHT TO BELIEVE ALL MEN AND OF LIGHT LAPSE OF WORDS

LORD, give me help out of tribulation for man's help is vain. How oft have I not found faith and trust where I weened to have had it; how oft also have I found it where I least presumed. Vain therefore is trust of man but the help of righteous men is in thee, God. Blessed be thou, Lord my God, in all things that fall to us. We be sick and unstable, soon changed and soon deceived.

Who is he that so warily and so circumspectly may keep himself in all things but that some time he shall come into some deceit and some perplexity? But he that trusteth in thee Lord and seeketh thee with a simple heart, slideth not so lightly. And if he fall into any tribulation or be wrapped in any perplexity he shall soon be delivered thereof by thee or comforted by thee for thou shalt not forsake them that trust in thee to the end.

Seldom is found a trusty friend that is persevering (lasting) in all the necessities of his friend. So, Lord, in all things thou art most trusty and among all there is not such another. O how well knew that holy soul that said "My mind is settled in God and grounded in Christ." If it was so with me,

dread of man should not so trouble me, nor the darts of words should not move me.

Who may see before and be ware of all things? If things foreseen ofttimes hurt what then do things unforeseen but hurt grievously? But why did I not foresee better for myself wretch that I am? Also why believed I so lightly other men? But we are men and we are none other than frail men though we be deemed and called of other men as angels.

Whom shall I believe, Lord, whom but thee that art truth that deceivest not nor canst be deceived? And, on the other side, every man is a liar, sick, unstable and sliding and specially in words. So that scarce may be believed anon that that soundeth well and righteously in a man's ear.

How prudently warnedst thou men to be ware of men and that a man's familiar friends are his enemies and that it is not good to believe those who say "Lo there" and "lo here." I am taught, and would God (it led) to greater wariness and less folly in me.

"Be ware," said one, "be ware: keep to thyself that I say" and whiles I kept silence and weened it to be hid, he could not keep counsel of that he asked to be kept hid but anon discovered both me and him and went his way. From such fables and unwary men Lord defend me that I fall not into their hands nor do no such things.

Give to my mouth a true word and a stable and a false wily tongue put far from me. O how good and how peaceable a thing it is for a man not to speak of other men, nor indifferently to believe all things

nor lightly to speak a thing forth; to reveal himself to few, yea evermore to be sought (looked on) as a beholder of the heart, and not to be borne about with every wind of words but to desire all things inwardly and outwardly after the good pleasure of thy will.

How sure a thing it is for the keeping of heavenly grace to flee from and not to desire such things that should give matter for minding outwardly: but with all manner of business (care) to follow the things that make for amendment of life and fervour of spirit. O how many have been hurt by virtue known and praised and how wholesomely hath grace, kept under silence, availed men in this frail life that is all temptation and knighthood (service).

CHAPTER LI

OF TRUST TO BE HAD IN GOD AGAINST EVIL WORDS

SON, stand steadfastly and trust in me: for what are words but words? they flee through the air but they hurt not a stone. If thou be guilty think that thou art going gladly to amend thyself. If thou know thyself guilty in nothing, think that thou wilt suffer all gladly for God. It is little enough that thou now and then shouldst suffer words who canst not yet suffer strong beatings.

And why takest thou so small things to heart, except that thou art fleshly and takest more heed to man than behoveth thee? And because thou dreadest to be despised thou wilt not be reproved for thine excesses and seekest the shadows of excuses. But behold thyself better and thou shalt know that yet the world liveth in thee and vain love of pleasing men.

But all the while that thou fleest (shunnest) to be rebuked and confounded for thy faults it appeareth verily that thou art not very meek, nor the world dead to thee, nor thou crucified to the world. But hear my word and thou shalt not charge (care for) ten thousand words of men. Lo if all things were said against thee that would maliciously be feigned against thee how should they annoy thee if thou wouldst suffer them utterly to pass and

wouldest no more set by them than a straw? Whether may they take one hair out from thee?

But he that hath no heart within and hath not God before his eyes is soon moved with a word of blame. But he that trusteth in me and coveteth not to stand by his own judgment shall be without dread of man. Lo I am judge and knower of all secrets; I know how all things are done, I know the wrong-doer and the sufferer. Out from me went this word and by my sufferance this hath happened that the thoughts of many hearts might be revealed.

I shall judge the guilty and the innocent; but with a privy judgment, for I would prove both. Man's wits often fail and deceive but my judgment is true; wherefore it shall stand and shall not be subverted. It is hid ofttimes and is open to few in all things—but it never erreth and it may not err, though to the eye of unwise men it appeareth not righteous; wherefore in every judgment recourse ought to be had to me and (men ought) not to lean to their own decision. For the righteous man shall not be sorry whatever come to him from God; yea, though anything unrighteously be brought forth against him, he shall not much charge (care for) it; nor he shall not vainly rejoice if he be reasonably excused by others for he thinketh that I search the heart and the reins and that I judge not after the face and after man's appearance; for ofttimes in mine eyes that is found culpable which to the judgment of man seemeth laudable.

Lord God, righteous judge, mighty and patient, thou knowest man's frailty and man's shrewdness (per-

'versity): be my strength and all my trust for my conscience sufficeth not for me. Thou knowest that I know not: and therefore I ought in every blame and reproof to meek myself and suffer mildly.

Merciful Lord, forgive me as oft as I have not done so; and give me grace of more large sufferance, for thy copious mercy is better to me for getting of indulgence than my fancied righteousness for the defence of my secret conscience. And though I find no guilt in my conscience yet in that may I not justify myself; for in thy sight no man living can be justified.

CHAPTER LII

THAT ALL GRIEVOUS THINGS ARE TO BE SUFFERED FOR THE LIFE TO COME

Son let not the labours that thou hast taken upon thee for me make thee weary nor tribulations throw thee all down; but let my promise in every adventure strength thee and comfort thee. I am sufficient to reward above all manner and all measure. Thou shalt not labour long nor shalt ever be grieved with sorrows. Abide a little while and thou shalt see a swift end of all evils.

One hour shall come when all labour shall cease and all noise; little it is and short, all that passeth with time. Do that thou dost, labour truly in my vineyard; I shall be thy reward. Write, read, sing, mourn, keep silence, pray, suffer contrariousness manly; for everlasting life is worth all these and much more and much greater battles.

Peace shall come in one day known to our Lord, and of that time shall there be neither day nor night but light perpetual, infinite brightness, sovereign peace and sicker (sure) rest. Thou shalt not say then, Who shall deliver me from the body of this death, nor thou shalt not cry, Wo me for my dwelling here is overlong tarried; for death shall be thrown down headlong and health shall be

without fauting (blemish), none anxiety, blissful pleasure, sweet company and pleasant to behold.

O if thou hadst seen the perpetual crowns of saints in heaven and in how much glory they joy now that sometimes in this world were deemed contemptible and as folk unworthy to live, forsooth thou wouldst meek (humble) thyself unto the earth and wouldst rather be subject under all than to be above one; nor thou wouldst desire the merry days of this world but rather thou wouldst joy to suffer tribulation for God and wouldst take it as for a great gain to be accounted for naught among men.

O if these things tasted well to thee and entered into thine heart how durst thou once complain? Whether all laborious things ought not to be suffered for everlasting life? It is no little thing to win or to lose the kingdom of God. Lift up therefore thy visage unto heaven. Lo, I and all my saints with me which that in this world have had great battle, now they joy, now they be comforted, now they be sure, now they rest and in that end shall abide with me in the kingdom of my father.

CHAPTER LIII

OF THE DAY OF ETERNITY AND THE ANGUISH OF THIS LIFE

O THE most blissful dwelling place of that high city. O the most clear day of eternity which no night maketh dark but sovereign truth ever beshineth it; the day ever glad, ever sure and never changing state into the contrary. O would God that that day had once shined and all these temporal things had taken an end. And this day shineth to saints in a perpetual bright clearness but to pilgrims all afar and by a mirror.

The citizens of heaven know how joyous is that day; the exiled sons of Eve wail, so sorrowful is this day. The days of this time are little and evil, full of sorrow and anguish; when man is defouled with many sins, tied with many passions, strained with many dreads, distant with many cares, distract with many curiosities, wrapped in many vanities, surrounded with many errors, broken with many labours, grieved with many temptations, made soft and weak with delights, tormented with need and poverty.

O when shall there be an end of all these evils? when shall I be delivered from the wretched thraldom of vices? when shall I, Lord, have mind on thee alone? when shall I at full be glad in thee? when

shall I be without any impediment in true liberty, without grievance of soul or body. When shall there be sad (settled) peace, peace undisturbed and sure, peace within and without, peace firm on every side?

Good Jhesu, when shall I stand to see thee? when shall I behold the glory of thy kingdom? when wilt thou be to me all in all? When shall I be with thee in thy kingdom that thou hast ordained to thy well beloved from everlasting? I am left poor and exile in the land of enemies where are daily battles and greatest misfortunes. Comfort mine exile, assuage my sorrow, for to thee suspireth all my desire; for all that the world offereth me as solace is to me an heavy burden.

I desire to enjoy thee inwardly but I cannot take thee. I desire to cleave to heavenly things but fleshly things and unmortified passions depress me. I will in my mind be above all things, but in despite of myself I am constrained to be beneath. So I unhappy man fight with myself and am made grievous to myself while the spirit seeketh what is above and the flesh what is beneath. O what I suffer within while I think on heavenly things in my mind; the company of fleshly things cometh against me when I pray.

My God, be not far from me decline not from thy servant in wrath. Lighten out in shining and waste them, send out thine arrows and thou shalt spill them and all the fantasies of the enemy shall be borne down. Gather together all my wits to thee, make me to forget all worldly things and grant me soon to cast away and despise all fantasies of vices.

Thou, truth eternal, succour me that no vanity may move me. Come heavenly sweetness and make to flee from thy visage all manner of impurity. Forgive me also and mercifully forget as ofttimes as in my prayer I think on any other thing than thee. I acknowledge truly that I am wont to behave me there full distractedly and many times I am not there where I stand or sit bodily but rather I am there where I am borne with my thoughts. Where my thought is, there am I; and where my thought is there I love. That thing cometh soon to mind that naturally pleaseth or delighteth through use. Wherefore thou, truth, saidest openly "Where is thy treasure there is thine heart."

If I love heaven I am glad to think on heavenly things. If I love the world, I joy in the world's felicity and sorrow in the world's adversity. If I love the flesh I imagine ofttimes on such things as belong to the flesh. If I love the spirit, I have a delight to think on spiritual things. Whatever things that I love of them gladly I speak and hear and the images of such I bear to mine house.

But blissful is that man that, for the Lord, giveth all creatures licence to go their way, that doth violence to nature, that crucifieth the lusts of the flesh with the fervour of the spirit, that with a clear conscience he may offer to thee a pure prayer and be worthy to be present with the quire (choir) of angels, all earthly things excluded within and without.

CHAPTER LIV

OF DESIRE OF EVERLASTING LIFE AND HOW GREAT THINGS ARE PROMISED TO FIGHTERS

Son, when thou feelest the desire of everlasting bliss to be poured into thee from above, and thou desirest to go out of the tabernacle of the body, that thou mayst behold my clearness without shadow of changeableness, open thine heart and receive this holy inspiration with all manner of desire. Yield to the sovereign bounty most large thanks that doth with thee so worthily, visiteth mercifully, exciteth ardently, lifteth up mightily, lest thou with thine own weight slide down to earthly things.

For thou takest not this with thine own thought or thine own power but only by worthiness of the most high grace and of God's beholding thee that thou mayst profit the more in virtues and greater meekness and make thee ready for battles that are to come and cleave to me with all thine affection and that thou mayst study to serve me with a fervent will.

Son, ofttimes the fire burneth but without flame and smoke it stieth (riseth) never up. So the desires of some men are lift up to heavenly things and nevertheless they are not free from the temptation of fleshly affections; and therefore they do not in all

wise purely for the service of God in that they ask so desirously of God. And such is ofttime the desire that thou hast said should be so importunate, for that is not pure and perfect that is done for one's own profit.

Ask that thing that is not to thee delightful nor profitable but that that is to me acceptable and honourable; for if thou judge righteously thou oughtest to put mine ordinance before thy desire and prefer and follow it afore all things. For I have heard thy desire and thy manifold mournings.

Now thou wouldst be in the liberty of the glory of the sons of God; now the house everlasting delighteth thee and the heavenly country full of joy; but yet this hour is not come; there is yet another time, time of battle, time of labour and of proving. Thou desirest to be fulfilled with the most sovereign good; but thou canst not follow that now.

" I am " saith our Lord " abide me, till the kingdom of God come." As yet thou art to be proved on earth and to be exercised in many things. Consolation shall be given thee now and then but copious fulfilling is not granted. Be thou comforted therefore and be strong as well in doing as in suffering things contrary to nature.

It behoveth thee to be clothed in a new man and to be changed into another. It behoveth thee to do ofttimes that thou wouldest not do, and to forsake that thou wouldest do. That that pleaseth others shall cause profit, but that that pleaseth thyself shall not profit; what other men say shall be heard, what thou sayest shall be accounted as naught.

Other men shall ask and take: thou shalt ask and not

get. Others shall be great in men's mouths; of thee men shall hold their peace. To others this or that shall be committed; thou shalt be judged in nothing profitable. Wherefore kind (nature) shall some time be sorry and suffer great battle if thou in silence hear these things. In these and in many other like things the true servant of God is wont to be proved, how he may deny and break himself.

There is scarce any such thing which thou needest think of as to see and suffer such things as are contrary to thy will, specially when thou art commanded to do such things as seem to thee disconvenient and least profitable. And for thou darest not withstand the higher power set above thee under our Lord therefore it seemeth to thee hard to go at another man's beckoning and to leave all thine own feeling.

But, son, pesie (weigh) the fruit and the swift end of all these labours and the meed, great without measure; and then shalt thou have no grievance thereat but a mighty comfort of patience. For this little will that thou forsakest freely thou shalt ever have thine own will in heaven. There thou shalt find whatever thou wilt and all that thou canst desire; there shall be plenty of all good without dread of losing or foregoing. There thy will, ever being one with me, shall never covet strange things nor private.

There shall no man withstand thee, there shall no man complain on thee, no man shall let (hinder) thee, no man shall contrary thee, but all things desired shall be present together and shall refresh all thy

desire and shall fill it to the highest. There shall I give glory and honour for shame and reproof, a pall of praise for mourning and instead of the lowest place a seat in the kingdom for ever. There shall appear the fruit of obedience, there the labour of penance and meek subjection shall be crowned gloriously. Wherefore bow down thyself meekly under the hands of all and take no heed who said this or who commanded this; but take care of this above all whether prelate or one less than thou or one even with thee ask any thing of thee or move (apply) any thing to thee, that thou take all as good and study to fulfil it with a pure will.

Let one seek this another that; let one rejoice in this and one in that; let one be praised a thousand thousand times; but joy thou neither in this nor in that, but in contempt of thyself and in my well pleasing and honour. This is ever to be desired of thee but both by life and death let God be ever glorified in thee.

CHAPTER LV

THAT THE DESOLATE MAN OUGHT TO OFFER HIMSELF INTO THE HANDS OF GOD

LORD God, holy father, blessed mayst thou be now and everlastingly, for as thou wilt so it is done and that thou dost is good. Glad must thy servant be in thee and not in himself nor in any other thing, for thou alone art true gladness, thou art mine hope and my crown, thou art my joy and my honour. What hath thy servant but what he hath taken of thee and that without merit of his own? All things are thine that thou hast given and that thou hast made.

I am poor and in labour from my youth up and my soul is ofttimes sorry unto tears and some times it is troubled towards itself for encumbrance of passions. I desire the joy of peace; the peace of thy sons I ask that are fed of thee in the light of consolation. If thou give peace, if thou pour on me holy joy, the soul of thy servant shall be full of and devout in thy praise.

But if thou withdraw thyself as thou art wont to do full oft, he may not run the way of thy commandments; but rather his knees are bound to knock his breast; for it is not with him as it was yesterday and the other day when thy lantern shined upon his head and he was defended under the shadow of

thy wings from temptations falling upon him. Righteous father and ever to be praised, the hour is come that thy servant may be proved. Lovely father, it is worthy that this hour thy servant should suffer somewhat for thee. Father perpetually to be honoured, let thy servant live inwardly (the inner life) ever before thee whom thou knowest from the beginning to be such that he should for a little time fall outwardly (in the outer life).

For a little time let him be set little by, be meeked (humbled) and fail afore men, let him be broken with passions and languors, that he may rise again with thee in the morrow tide of a new light and be made bright in heavenly things. Holy father, thou hast so ordained and willed and that is done that thou hast commanded, for this is thy grace to thy friend in this world to suffer and to be troubled for thy love, how oft and at whose hand soever thou sufferest it to be done.

Without thy counsel and thy prudence and without cause is nothing done on earth. Good is it for me, Lord, that thou hast meeked (humbled) me, that I may learn thy laws and cast away elation of heart and presumption. It is profitable to me that shame and confusion have covered my face that I may require thee to be my comfort rather than men. I have learned hereby to dread thine inscrutable judgments that painest (punishest) the righteous man with the wicked, but not without righteousness and equity.

Lord I thank thee that thou hast not spared my evils (sins) but that thou hast bruised me with beatings,

putting sorrows into me and sending anguish unto me within and without. There is none that may comfort me of all that are under heaven but thou my Lord God the heavenly leech of souls that smitest and healest, that leadest to the lowest places and bringest from thence again. Thy discipline is upon me and thy rod she shall teach me.

Lo, well beloved father, I am in thine hands. I incline me under the rod of thy correction, smite my back and my neck so that I may bow my crookedness to thy will. Make me a meek disciple, as thou art wont to do, that I may go entirely at thy beckoning. To thee I commit me and all mine, to correct; for it is better to be chastised here than in time coming. Thou knowest all things and every thing and nothing in man's conscience is hid from thee. Thou knowest things to come ere they be done, nor is there need that man teach thee or admonish thee of those things that are done on earth.

Thou knowest what is expedient for my profit and how much tribulation is needed to purge the rust of my vices. Do with me thy desired will and despise not my sinful life—to none better known nor clearer than to thee alone. Grant me, Lord, to know all that is to be known and to love all that is to be loved and to praise all that sovereignly pleaseth thee; to have in reputation that that appeareth precious to thee and to blame that is foul in thine eyes.

Suffer me not to judge after the sight of the outward eyes, nor give sentence after the hearing of ears of unlearned men, but to discern in a true judgment both of things visible and spiritual and above all things ever to inquire after the will of thy pleasure.

Men's wits are ofttimes deceived in judging; as lovers of this world are ofttimes blinded in loving only things visible.

What is a man the better therefore that he is accounted greater of man? The deceivable beguileth the deceivable, the vain the vain, the blind the blind, the sick the sick whiles he lifteth him up, and truly confoundeth him more whiles he vainly praiseth him. For what any man in is thine eyes, Lord, so much he is and no more, as saith meek Francis.

CHAPTER LVI

THAT MAN MUST GIVE HIMSELF TO LOW WORKS WHEN HIGH WORKS FAIL

Son, thou mayst not always stand in the most fervent desire of virtue, nor abide stedfastly in the highest degree of contemplation; but thou hast need now and then because of original corruption to descend to lower things and bear the burden of this corruptible life against thy will and with weariness. As long as thou bearest a mortal body thou shalt find heaviness and grievance of heart. It behoveth thee therefore ofttimes in the flesh to wail under the burdens of the flesh inasmuch as thou mayst not without ceasing cleave to spiritual studies and divine contemplation.

Then it is speedful to thee to draw thyself to meek and outward works and to take recreation in good active occupations abiding my coming and the high visitation with a stedfast trust and to suffer patiently thine exile and dryness of soul till thou be visited anew and delivered from all anxieties; for I shall make thee to forget thy labours and enjoy inward quiet: I shall open before thee the meadows of the scriptures that thou with a heart may run the way of my commandments: and then thou shalt say "the sufferings of this time are not worthy to the glory that shall be revealed in us."

CHAPTER LVII

THAT MAN SHOULD ACCOUNT HIMSELF WORTHY OF NO CONSOLATION

LORD I am not worthy of any consolation nor of any spiritual visitation, and therefore thou dost righteously with me when thou forsakest me, needy and desolate. For if I could pour out tears like the sea, yet were I not worthy of thy consolation. Wherefore I am nothing more worthy than to be scourged and punished for I have ofttimes offended thee and forsaken thee greatly in many things. Wherefore, true reason peised (being weighed) I am not worthy the least consolation.

But thou gracious and merciful Lord that wilt not that thy works should perish and wilt show the riches of thy goodness in the vessels of mercy above all our merit vouchsafe to comfort thy servant above all man's measure; for thy consolations are not as man's talkings or what have I done, Lord, that thou shouldst give me any heavenly consolation? I have no remembrance of any good that I have done but the very truth is that I have been ever ready and prone to vices and slow to amendment the which I can not deny. If I would say otherwise thou wouldst stand against me and there would no man defend me

What have I deserved for my sins but hell and everlasting

fire? I acknowledge in truth that I am worthy of all manner of scorning and despite nor it sitteth (suiteth) me not to be numbered among thy devout servants. And though I bear not this easily nevertheless for truth's sake I shall against myself reprove my sins that I may the more easily get thy mercy. What shall I say, a guilty man and full of all confusion? I have no words to speak but only this word: I have sinned, Lord, I have sinned: have mercy on me, forgive me. Suffer me a little while that I may wail my sorrow or ever I go to the dark land covered with the darkness of death.

What requirest thou most of the guilty and the wretched sinner but that he be converted and meek (humble) himself for his sins? In true contrition and meekness of heart is brought forth hope of forgiveness, the troubled conscience is reconciled, grace lost is repaired, man is defended from wrath that is to come and God and the meek soul meet in a holy kiss. Contrition for sin is to the Lord an acceptable sacrifice, smelling much sweeter than any sweet incense. This is also that acceptable ointment that thou wouldst should be poured upon thy most holy feet; for thou hast never despised the contrite and the meeked (humbled) heart. There is the place of refuge from the visage of the wrath of the enemy; there is amended and washen away all that is contract and defouled elsewhere.

CHAPTER LVIII

THAT GRACE IS NOT PART OF THEM THAT FOLLOW EARTHLY THINGS

Son, my grace is precious, suffereth not itself to be mingled with strange things nor earthly consolations. Wherefore it behoveth thee to cast away impediments to grace if thou wilt to receive the inpouring thereof. Ask for thyself a secret place, love to dwell alone with thyself, seek confabulation of none other; but rather put out to God a devout prayer that thou mayst have a devout mind and a pure conscience. Deem all the world as naught; put the vacation to (readiness for) God before all other things for thou canst not both take heed to me and delight thee in things transitory.

It behoveth thee to be eloyned (distant) from known and dear friends and keep thy mind private from all temporal solace. So beseecheth the blessed apostle Peter that all true Christian men should hold themselves in this world as strangers and pilgrims. O how great confidence shall be to the man that shall die whom affection for no earthly thing withholdeth in this world. But thus to have the heart departed from all things, a sick and a weak soul cannot understand it nor doth the beastly (natural) man know the liberty of the inward man.

Nevertheless if one would be very spiritual, it behoveth

him to renounce both them that be afar and them that are nigh and of none so much to be ware as of himself. If thou overcome thyself perfectly thou shalt the more lightly put under foot all other things. It is perfect victory for a man to overcome himself. If any keep himself so under that sensuality obeys reason and reason me in all things he shall be a true victor of himself and lord of the world.

If thou desire to stie (step) up to the height of perfection thou must begin manly and set the axe to the root that thou mayst root up and destroy all inordinate affection to thyself and to all private and material good. On this vice that a man loveth himself too inordinately hangs every thing almost that is groundly (utterly) to be overcome; the which evil overcome and put under forthwith there shall be great peace and tranquillity

But few there are that labour perfectly to die to themselves and do not fully stretch themselves beyond themselves; therefore they remain implicated and encumbered in themselves that they may not be lift up in spirit above themselves. Whoso that desireth freely to walk with me it behoveth him that he mortify all his shrewd (evil) and inordinate affections and that he cleave to no creature lustfully with any private love.

CHAPTER LIX

OF DIVERSE MOVINGS OF NATURE AND OF GRACE

Son, attend diligently to the movings of nature and of grace, for they are full contrary and subtly moved and they can scarce be perceived except it be by a spiritual man and a man inwardly illumined. All folk desire that is good and in their words and in their deeds they put forward some manner of good; wherefore many are deceived under colour of good.

Nature is wily and draweth many men and holdeth them as in a snare and deceiveth them and hath herself ever as an end, seeking none other. But grace goeth simply and declineth from all that seemeth evil, pretending no falseness or deceits and doth all things purely for God in whom finally she resteth. Nature dieth against his will, he will not be thrown down nor overcome nor be under nor willingly come under yoke; but grace laboureth and studieth to mortification of itself, she withstandeth sensuality, she seeketh to be made subject, she desireth to be overcome, she will not use her own liberty but she loveth to be under discipline, she coveteth to have lordship over nobody but to live, to stand and to be only under God, ready, for God, to be meekly inclined and bowed to every creature of mankind.

Nature laboureth for his own profit and taketh heed what lucre may come to himself alone, but grace considereth not what is profitable and advantageous to one but to many. Nature receiveth gladly honour and reverence; but grace giveth all worship and glory freely to God. Nature dreadeth shame and despite; but grace rejoiceth to suffer for the name of Jhesu. Nature loveth idleness and bodily rest, but grace cannot be void or idle, but gladly taketh upon her labour and travail. Nature seeketh to have curious things and fair things and loatheth all vile things and gross things, but grace delighteth in simple things and low things and despiseth no asperity nor refuseth to be clothed in old clothes. Nature beholdeth temporal things and joyeth of earthly winnings and sorroweth for worldly harms and is moved soon to wrath with a little word of wrong; but grace attendeth everlasting things nor cleaveth not to temporal things nor is troubled with the loss of them, nor is not angered with sharp words for she setteth all her joy and her treasure in heaven where nothing perisheth.

Nature is covetous and more gladly taketh than giveth, he loveth his own and private goods; but grace is full of pity, she is common, she escheweth singular (private) things and is content with few and deemeth it more blissful to give than to take. Nature inclineth to creatures, to his own flesh, to vanities, to discourses and running about; but grace draweth to God and to virtues, renounceth creatures, fleeth the world, hateth the fleshly desires, restraineth wanderings about and is ashamed to appear in open places. Nature gladly receiveth

outward comforts; but grace delighteth in the sovereign good above all things visible. Nature doth all things for his own gain and for his own profit and can do nothing freely; and if he do any benefit he will wait (expect) to have as good or better, or praise, or favour, and desireth that his deeds and his gifts should be praised and much set by. But grace seeketh no temporal things, nor seeketh none other meed but God whom solely she desireth for her reward; nor desireth she no more of temporal things than as may be helping to her to get everlasting things.

Nature rejoiceth of many friends and allies and joyeth of noble places and of great birth, laugheth upon might and power, blandisheth rich folk, and hath plesance in such as are like to himself; but grace loveth her enemies; she is not proud of multitude of friends nor accounteth place nor birth unless there be the more virtue there; she favoureth more the poor than the rich; she hath more companion in the innocent than in the mighty, she joyeth with the true man, not with the false man, and ever exhorteth to good, to seek more grace and to be like the Son of God in virtues. Nature complaineth soon of faults and of grievance but grace stedfastly beareth poverty and need. Nature reflecteth all things to himself and for himself he striveth and argueth: but grace reduceth all things to God of whom they well out groundly and originally; she ascribeth nothing that is good to herself nor presumeth nothing proudly, nor striveth not, nor preferreth not her sentence (opinion) before others, but in every feeling and in every understanding

submitteth herself to the everlasting wisdom and to God's examination.

Nature coveteth to know secrets and to hear new things; he will appear outwardly and by feeling have experience of many things; he desireth to be known and to do such things of which praise and wonder may arise. But grace taketh no heed to perceive new things and curious, for all this groweth of corruption, since there is nothing new and durable upon the earth. Grace also teacheth to restrain the wits, to eschew vain plesance and ostentation, meekly to hide such things as are commendable and wonderful and in every thing and every science to seek out the fruit of profit and God's praise and his honour. Grace desireth neither herself nor her works to be preached openly, but desireth God to be blest in his gifts that granteth all things of his pure largesse.

This grace is a light supernatural and a special gift of God and a proper sign of the chosen children of God and the earnest of everlasting health; for God lifteth up man from earthly things to love heavenly things and of him that is fleshly he maketh (a) spiritual (man). Wherefore the more that nature is holden under and overcome, the more grace is poured in and the inward man is every day renewed according to the image of God with new visitations.

CHAPTER LX

OF CORRUPTION OF NATURE AND OF THE MIGHT OF GRACE

My Lord God that hast made me to thine image and likeness, grant me this grace that thou hast shown to be so great and so needful to man's health that I may overcome my most wicked nature that draweth me to sins and to perdition. For I feel in my flesh the law of sin contrarying the law of my mind and leading me as a caitiff to obey sensuality in many things; nor may I withstand his passion unless thy most holy grace passed into mine heart be assistant to me. Needful it is to have thy grace yea and thy great grace that nature may be overcome that is ever ready to evil, of young age and youth. For nature (having) slidden and (being) vitiated by the first man Adam through sin, the pain of that spot hath come down to all men so that nature that was well and evenly made by thee is now set for (fixed in) vice and infirmity of corrupt nature, inasmuch as its movement left and abandoned to himself draweth ever to evil and to low things and that little good strength that is left is as but a little sparkle hid in ashen. This is natural reason surrounded on every side with darkness having yet judgment of good and evil and distance of (distinction between) true and false, though it

'be unable to fulfil that it approveth nor useth it now full light of truth or holiness of affections.

Therefore it is, my God, that after the inward man I delight me in thy law knowing thy commandment to be good and just and holy, proving also all sins and all evil to be fled, but in my flesh I serve the law of sin while I obey sensuality more than reason. Herethrough it is that to will good cometh to me, but to do it in deed I find not in me. Wherefore ofttimes I purpose many good things but for that thy grace lacketh (faileth) that should help mine infirmity, through a light resistance I turn back and fail. Herethrough it happeneth that though I know the way of perfection and that I see clearly what I ought to do yet I am so pressed with the weight of mine own corruption that I may not arise to more perfection.

O Lord how most necessary is grace to begin good, to profit in good and to be perfected in good. For without it I may do nothing but in thee I am mighty in all things, grace strengthing me. O that true heavenly grace, without which properly there are no merits nor no gifts of nature to be peised. Lord, without grace, as compared with thee they be of no value, neither crafts nor riches nor beauty nor strength nor wit nor eloquence. For gifts of nature are common to the good and to the evil but the proper gift of the chosen children is grace or charity wherewith he that is nobled shall be worthy everlasting life. This grace is so eminent and so excellent that neither the gift of prophecy nor working of miracles nor speculation, be it never so high, is of any estimation without her; yea, neither

faith nor hope nor other virtues are acceptable to thee without grace and charity.

O thou most blissful grace, that makest the poor in spirit rich in virtue and the meek in heart rich in many goods. Come, descend unto me, fulfil me betimes with thy consolation lest my soul fail for weariness and dryness of mind. Lord I beseech thee that I may find grace in thine eyes; for thy grace sufficeth me, other things that nature desireth not being counted. If I be tempted and vexed with many tribulations I shall not dread while thy grace is with me. She is my strength, she giveth me counsel and help. She is more mighty than all enemies, she is wiser than all the wise. She is mistress of truth, teacher of discipline, light of the heart, the solace of pressure (trouble), thrower down and driver away of sorrow, taker away of dread, nourisher of devotion and bringer forth of tears. What am I without her, but a dry tree and an unprofitable stock? Wherefore, Lord, let thy grace ever more go afore me and follow me and make me to be continually and busily given to good works by our Lord Jhesu Christ, thy Son.

CHAPTER LXI

THAT WE OUGHT TO DENY OURSELVES AND FOLLOW CHRIST BY THE CROSS

Son, as much as thou canst go out from thyself. As for a man to covet nothing outward maketh inward peace so for a man inwardly to forsake himself joineth and uniteth him to God. I will that thou learn perfect abnegation of thyself to my will without contradiction and complaining. Follow me: I am the way, truth and life. Without a way men go not, without truth men know not, without life men live not.

I am the way that thou shalt follow, I am the truth that thou shalt believe, and the life that thou shalt hope (for). I am the way undefouled, the truth infallible, the life interminable. I am the most even way, most sovereign truth, true life increate and life blissful. If thou dwell in my way thou shalt know truth and truth shall deliver thee and thou shalt have everlasting life.

If thou wilt live keep the commandments. If thou wilt know truth believe me. If thou wilt be perfect sell all things. If thou wilt be my disciple deny thyself. If thou wilt have the life that is to come despise this that is present. If thou wilt be enhanced in heaven, meek (humble) thyself in the world. If thou wilt reign with me, bear my cross;

for only the servants of the cross find the way of bliss and of everlasting light.

Lord Jhesu, for thy way was strait and despised of the world, grant me to follow thee with the world's despising: for the servant is no greater than his lord nor the disciple above his master. Let thy servant be exercised in thy life for there is mine health and very holiness. Whatever I hear or read besides that, it refresheth not nor delighteth not fully.

Son, for thou hast read and knowest all these things thou art blissful if thou do them. He that hath my commandments and keepeth them he it is that loveth me and I shall love him and show myself to him and shall make him an heir in the kingdom of my father.

Lord Jhesu as thou hast said and promised so be it to me and so may I deserve. I have taken from thy hand the cross and so shall I bear it to my death as thou hast laid it upon me. Verily the cross is the life of a good monk and the leader to paradise. (When) it is begun it is not lawful to go backward nor is it behoveful to forsake it. Have done, brother, go we together; Jhesu shall be with us. For Jhesu we have taken this cross for Jhesu persevere we in the cross. He shall be our help that is our leader and our predecessor.

Lo our king goeth before us and shall fight for us. Let us follow manly, let no man dread terrors; be we ready to die bravely in battle; let us put no spot on our glory in fleeing from the cross.

CHAPTER LXII

THAT A MAN (MUST) NOT BE THROWN DOWN TOO MUCH IF HE FALL IN ANY FAULTS

Son, patience and meekness in adversity pleaseth me more than much jubilation and devotion in prosperity. Why doth a little thing said or done against thee make thee sorry? It is no new thing: it is not the first, nor shall not be the last, if thou live long. Thou art manly enough all the while no contrary cometh against thee. Thou canst counsel well and labour (prove) other men with wise words; but when a sudden tribulation cometh to thy gate, thou failest both in counsel and in strength.

Take heed to thy frailty whereof thou hast experience in many small objects and contrarinesses, nevertheless when these are all done for thine health and when they and such other happen, purpose as well as thou canst in thine heart that if they touch thee they throw thee not down nor long encumber thee; and at least suffer patiently if thou canst not suffer joyfully. And if thou canst not bear it gladly and feelest in thyself a loathing, restrain thyself and let nothing inordinate pass thy mouth that might be to the small and to the feeble an occasion of falling. The moving that would out (disturbance)

shall soon rest and, grace returning again, the inward sorrow shall soon be made sweet.

Yet I live, saith our Lord, ready to help thee and comfort thee more than I am wont so that thou trust in me and inwardly and devoutly pray to me. Be mighty in soul and gird thee and make thee ready to more sufferance. It is not done idly if thou perceive thyself ofttimes troubled or grievously tempted. Thou art a man and not God, thou art flesh and no angel; how canst thou abide ever in one state of virtue, since that the first angel in heaven lacked and the first man in paradise.

I am it that reareth to health them that mourn and bring to my Godhead them that know their own infirmity.

Lord, blessed be thy word sweet to my mouth above the honey and the honeycomb. What should I do in so great tribulation and in mine anguish unless thou comfortedst me with thy holy words? If at the last I may come to the port of health what reck I what things and how great things I suffer? Grant me a good end, grant me a gracious going out of this world; have mind on me, my God and direct me in the right way to thy kingdom. Amen.

CHAPTER LXIII

HIGH THINGS AND PRIVY JUDGMENTS OF GOD MUST NOT BE SEARCHED

Son be ware that thou dispute not of high matters and of the privy judgments of God, why this (one) is forsaken and another is taken up to so great grace; why this (one) is greatly pained and he is so excellently lift up. These things pass all man's faculty nor is there reason nor disputation that sufficeth to search God's judgment.

Wherefore when the enemy bringeth such things to mind or else curious men ask thee, answer and say with David: Lord thou art just and thy judgment is righteous; the judgments of God are true and justified in themselves. My judgments are to be dreaded and not to be searched; for they be incomprehensible to man's understanding.

Inquire nor dispute not of the merits of saints who is holier than another or who is greater in the kingdom of heaven. Such things ofttimes engender strifes and unprofitable contentions and nourish pride and vainglory whereof grow envies and dissensions while this (man) is about proudly to prefer one saint and another another. For a man to will to search and to know such things bringeth forth not fruit but rather displeaseth saints; for I am no God of dissension but of peace, which peace standeth more in true meekness than in selfish exaltation.

Some with a manner of zeal of love are drawn with more affection to these saints or to those saints but that affection is more of man than it is godly. I it am that made all saints and granted (them) grace. I gave glory: I know the merits of every (one); I presented them with blessings of sweetness; I predestinated them before the world; I chose them out of the world; they chose not me before; I called them by grace; I drew them by mercy; I led them by divers temptations; I poured into them great consolations; I gave perseverance; I crowned their patience.

I know the first and the last, I call them all with an inestimable love. I am to be praised in all my saints. I am to be blessed above all things and to be honoured in every one of them whom I have so graciously magnified and predestined without any merits going before. He therefore that despiseth one of my least, honoureth not the great; for I made both the great and the small. And he that doth hindering to any of my saints doth derogation to me and to all other in the kingdom of saints.

All are one by the bond of charity; they feel the same, and all one; they will the same and they all love in one. And yet what is most high of all, they love me more than themselves, and drawn out of their own love go all and wholly into love of me in whom they rest rejoicing. There is nothing that can turn them away or throw them down since they being full of everlasting truth burn in an unquenchable fire of charity.

Wherefore let fleshly and beastly (natural) men cease to

dispute of the state of saints that can only love their own and private joys. They put away and add according to their own inclination not as it pleaseth the everlasting truth; in many there is ignorance and specially in those that but little illumined can seldom love anybody with perfect spiritual love. They be greatly drawn with natural affection and men's friendship to these and to those; and as they behave them in these lower things so they imagine in heavenly things.

But there is a distance incomparable between those things that imperfect men think and those that men illumined by high revelation behold. Be ware therefore son that thou treat not curiously of such things as pass thy cunning but rather tend and labour to this that thou mayst be found though it be the least in the kingdom of heaven. And if a man knew what saint were holier or greater than another in the kingdom of heaven what should that knowing avail unless a man by the same knowledge meeked (humbled) himself before me and arose to greater praise of my name?

They are much more acceptable to God that think on the greatness of their sins and of the littleness of their virtues and how far they be from the perfection of saints than they that dispute of the greatness and of the littleness of saints. Better it is to pray to saints with devout prayer and tears and to desire their glorious suffrages with a meek soul than to search their secrets with vain inquiry.

They be well content and in the best manner content if men could be content and could restrain their vain speeches. They rejoice not in their own

merits, they ascribe to themselves no goodness but all to me; for I gave them all things of mine infinite charity. They are fulfilled with so great love of the Godhead and such overflowing joy that nothing faileth them of glory, nothing faileth them of bliss. All saints the higher that they are in glory the more meek they be and the nearer to me. Therefore it is written that they laid their crowns before God and fell down prostrate before the Lamb and worshipped him for ever and ever.

Many ask who is greatest in the kingdom of heaven that know not whether they shall be worthy to be accounted among the least. This is a great thing for a man to be the least in heaven where all be great and all are called the sons of God and so they shall be. When the disciples asked who was greatest in the kingdom of heaven they had this answer: Unless ye be converted and made as small children ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven; who ever therefore meeketh (humbleth) him as this little child he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

Woe to them that disdain to meek (humble) themselves willingly as small children for the low gate of the kingdom of heaven shall not admit them to enter in. Woe also to rich men that have their consolations here; for, poor men entering into the kingdom of heaven, they shall stand without, wailing. Joy, ye meek folk, and be glad ye poor; for yours is the kingdom of God so that ye go in truth.

CHAPTER LXIV

THAT ALL HOPE AND TRUST IS TO BE FIXED ONLY IN GOD

LORD what is the trust that I have in this life or what is my greatest solace of all things appearing under heaven? Whether not thou my Lord of whose mercy is no number? Where was it well with me without thee or when might it be evil, thou being present? I had liever be poor for thee than rich without thee. I choose rather to be a pilgrim with thee in earth than to have heaven without thee. Where thou art there is heaven: and where thou art not there is death and hell. Thou art my desire and therefore after thee it is needful to mourn to cry and to pray. I may fully trust in none that may help me in opportune necessities but only in thee my God.

Thou art mine hope, thou art my trust, thou my comfort and most faithful in all things. All other ask and seek their own advantages; thou pretendest only mine health and my profit and turnest all things to me into good. Yea though thou lay me out to divers temptations and adversities, all that thou ordainest to my profit, that art wont to prove thy chosen children in thousands of manners. In the which proving thou oughtest no less to be loved and praised than if thou fulfilledst me with heavenly consolations.

In thee therefore my Lord God I put all mine hope and all my refuge. In thee therefore I set all my tribulation and my anguish for I find all infirm and unstable whatever I behold outside thee. For many friends shall not avail nor many helpers shall not be able nor many wise counsellors give profitable counsel nor books of doctors give comfort nor precious substance of good deliver nor any secret or merry place make sure if thou be not assistant helping, comforting, informing and keeping. For all things that seem to be for the getting of peace and felicity, thou being absent, are not worth nor in truth give anything belonging to true felicity.

Thou therefore art the end of all good, the height of life, the depth of scriptures; and to hope in thee above all is the most mighty solace of thy servants. To thee are mine eyes dressed (directed), my God, father of mercies. Bless and sanctify my soul with an heavenly blessing, that it may be thy holy habitation and the seat of thine everlasting glory: and that nothing be found in the temple of thy dignity that may offend the eyes of thy majesty.

Look upon me according to the greatness of thy goodness and the multitude of thy pities and hear the prayer of thy poor servant being in exile all afar in the region of the shadow of death. Defend and keep the soul of thy little servant among so many perils of this corruptible life, and, thy grace going with him, direct him by the way of peace to the country of everlasting clearness. Amen.

PART IV

Here beginneth the fourth book of the following Jesu Christ and of the contemning of the world. Imprinted at the commandment of the most excellent Princess Margaret mother unto our sovereign lord King Henry the VII Countess of Rychemount and Derby, and by the same Princess it was translated out of French into English in form and manner ensuing, the year of our Lord God MDiiii.

PROLOGUS

COME to me, saith our merciful Lord, all that labour and be charged and I shall give unto you refection. And the bread that I shall give unto you shall be my flesh for the life of the world. Take and eat it for it is my body that for you shall be given in sacrifice. Do ye this in remembrance of me. For whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood he shall dwell in me and I in him. These words that I have said unto you be life and spirit of health

CHAPTER I

IN WHAT GREAT REVERENCE AND FERVENT DESIRE WE OUGHT TO RECEIVE OUR LORD JESU CHRIST

O my Lord Jesu Christ, eternal truth, these words before said be thy words, albeit they have not been said in one time nor written in one place yet for that they be thy words I ought faithfully and agreeably to understand them.

They be thy words and thou hast proffered them; and they be now mine for thou hast said them for my health. I will gladly receive them from thy mouth to the end that they may be better sown and planted in my heart. Thy words of so great pity, full of love and sweetness, greatly excite me; but Lord my proper sins fear and draw back my conscience, not pure enough to receive so great a mystery.

The sweetness of thy words incite and provoke me; but the multitude of my sins charge and sore grieve me.

Thou commandest that I shall come unto thee faithfully if I will have part with thee to the end that I may receive the nourishment of immortality if I desire to obtain the joy and life eternal.

Thou sayest, Lord, " Come ye to me all that labour and be charged and I shall refresh you "

O how sweet and amiable a word is that in the ear of

a sinner that thou, my Lord and God, listest of thy benign grace to bid me that am so poor and have so much need to the communion of thy precious body. O good Lord, what am I to presume to desire thee whom the heaven and earth may not comprehend: and thou sayest "Come ye all to me." What is this condescension and amiable bidding?

How shall I dare come unto thee, I who feel not that I have done any manner of good?

How shall I entertain thee in my house, I who so often have offended before thy glorious and right benign face?

The angels and archangels honour thee: the holy and just creatures dread thee and thou sayest, good Lord, "yet come ye all unto me." Lord, who should believe this thing to be true, if thyself did not say it?

And who is he that durst approach thereunto if thou didst not command it?

Noah, that just man, laboured for an hundred year to make the ark to the end that he might be saved with a few of his people. How may I prepare me then in an hour to receive thee with due reverence composer and creator of the world?

Moses, thy great familiar and special friend, made the ark of timber not corruptible which he covered with right pure gold and put in it the tables of the Law; and I, a corrupt creature how shall I now dare receive thee that art the maker of the Law and giver of grace and life unto all creatures?

The righteous Solomon, King of Israel, edified a rich temple to the praising and worshipping of thy name by the space of vii year and for viii days hallowed

the feast of the dedication of the same: he offered a thousand victims to pacify thy goodness with and put the ark of the Covenant in the place made ready for the same with the sound of clarions and trumpets.

How dare I then, cursed and right poor among other creatures, receive thee into my house, I who scarce can know that I have well passed and employed one hour of time nor to my knowledge that I have devoutly passed one half hour.

O blessed Jesu, how many there have been before me that have studied to do anything that might please thee; alas, how little a thing is it that I do albeit the time is short. And yet when I dispose myself to receive thy holy communion I am but loosely gathered together and full coldly purged from all distractions of mind; and certainly no thoughts unprofitable ought to come into the holy presence of thy deity.

Also I ought not to occupy me with any creature for I shall not receive an angel but the Lord of angels into the secret of my heart.

For there is a great difference between the ark of the Covenant with his relics and the right pure and precious body with this virtues not failing but evermore enduring; and between the sacrifice of the prefigurative Law that was to come and the true victim thy precious body that is the accomplishment of all the old sacrifice.

Wherefore then should not I be more inflamed in thy venerable presence and with more solicitude prepare myself to receive the sacred and holy gifts and benefits of thee, inasmuch as the holy ancient

patriarchs and prophets, kings and princes, with all the people, have showed so great affection towards thine honour and divine service in time past.

The right devout King David inclined to the ark of God with all his strength acknowledging and remembering the benefits done unto his fathers: he made organs of divers manners, and he composed psalms and instituted that they should be sung and he himself sang them with gladness and often times with the harp of the Holy Ghost. This king was inspired with the grace of God for he taught the people of Israel to praise God with all their hearts blessing, honouring and preaching daily his holy name.

If so great devotion and remembrance was done with divine service and praise before the ark of his testament how great reverence and devotion ought we then to have in the presence of the sacrament and in the assumption of the right excellent body of our Lord Jesu Christ

Also all Christian people use for to run to divers places for to visit the relics of saints and marvel to hear the marvellous deeds and works of them. They behold the great edifices or buildings of temples and kin the sacrificed bones of saints wrapped in cloth of silk and gold and thou my Lord God, saint of all saints, creator of all things, Lord of all angels, thou art present on this altar here before me.

Oftentimes the curiosity of men and the novelties of things not yet seen be of little fruit and less to be set by; principally where there is so light recourse to them and great wavering without any contrition;

but, my God, thou art all present in this blessed sacrament of the altar, very God and man, Jesu Christ, in whom the fruit eternal of health aboundeth and is perceived at all times when thou art worthily received.

And to this not any lightness of sensual curiosity draweth us but firm faith, devout hope and pure charity.

O God invisible, creator of all the world, how marvellously dost thou with us, how faithfully dost thou with them that do purpose to receive thyself in this blessed sacrament.

Certainly it surmounteth all understanding and draweth especially the hearts of devout people to devotion and embraceth their affection; for thy true and faithful friends that dispose all their life to amend themselves receive often great grace of devotion and virtue from that most worthy sacrament.

O marvellous hid grace which all manner of faithful Christian people of our Lord Jesu Christ only know; but the infidels and subjects unto sin may thereof have no experience.

In that sacrament the spiritual graces be confirmed and the virtue that was lost in the soul is repaired and beauty, by sin wasted, is recovered.

Sometimes this grace is so great that often with the plenitude of devotion not only the mind but also the feeble body feels its might and strength augmented; wherefore it behoveth us to have sorrow and pity for our sloth and negligence that we are not drawn with so great desire and affection to receive our Lord Jesu Christ in whom is all hope and the merit of them that ought to be saved: for

he is our health and redemption and the consolation of travellers and the eternal fruition of saints

Also we ought to have sorrow that so many understand, savour and reverence so little this holy sacrament which rejoiceth heaven and keepeth all the world.

Alas for this blindness and hardness of men's hearts that will not consider so singular and also so inestimable a gift as is given unto us but it falleth into inadvertence by daily and accustomable usage.

For if the sacrifice of this holy sacrament were done openly but in one place and but by one priest in all the world with how great desire, think ye, the people would go to that place and to that priest to hear the godly mysteries done by him; but now be made many priests and in many places this holy sacrament is offered to the end that the grace and love of God to man may the more appear forasmuch as this holy communion is spread throughout the world.

Thanks be unto thee, good pastor eternal, that hast vouchsafed to refresh and feed us poor banished creatures with thy right precious body and blood and also by the words of thine own mouth hast desired us to receive this holy mystery saying "Come ye all unto me that be charged and I will refresh you."

CHAPTER II

HOW THE GREAT CHARITY AND BOUNTY OF GOD IS SHEWED UNTO MAN IN THE HOLY SACRAMENT

O MY God I come unto Thee putting my confidence in Thy mercy and bounty; I sigh and come unto my Saviour; I, hungry and thirsty, unto the fountain of life; poor and needy unto the King of heaven; the servant unto his Lord, the creature unto his maker, a person desolate unto his piteous comforter.

But wherefore is this that thou comest thus unto me? who am I that thou wilt give thus thine own self to me? How dare I so simple and poor a sinner be bold to appear before thee and how can it please thee to come unto such a wretch?

Thou knowest thy servant and well understandest that nothing is good in him why thou shouldst do this grace unto me.

Then do I confess my unworthiness and acknowledge thy bounty and praise thy pity and give unto thee thanks for thy so much great charity; and thou doest this for thyself, good Lord, and not for my merit, to the end that thy bounty may the more be known unto me.

Thy charity is more largely verified and thy meekness commended more perfectly since it thus pleaseth

thee and also thou hast commanded it to be done; this thy pleasure contenteth me and, with my will, my wickedness shall not resist against thee.

O sweet and benign Jesu how great reverence and thanksgiving with perpetual praise be due unto thee, my good Lord, Jesu Christ, that by thy pleasure and will I may receive thy blessed body whose worthiness no man is found able to declare or express.

But what shall I think of this communion when I shall come unto thee my Lord God, which I cannot duly honour, and yet I desire devoutly to receive thee.

What may I think better and more profitable for me than to humble myself wholly before thee and to praise thine infinite bounty above all things.

I praise thee my Lord God everlastingly and dispraise myself and submit me unto the deepness of my wretchedness. O my God thou art saint of all saints and I the filth of all sinners, yet thou inclinest thyself unto me that am not worthy to behold thee.

Alas my sweet creator that so meekly comest unto me and willest to be with me and desirest me unto thy dinner and givest unto me the meat of heaven and the bread of angels which is bread of life and no less thing than thyself which didst descend from heaven and give life unto the world; let us see here what great love proceedeth from thee and what gentleness doth shine upon us.

How great yieldings of thanks and love be due unto thee from us sinners. O how profitable and how

healthful was thy counsel when thou didst institute and ordain this gracious gift. O how sweet and joyous is that feast wherein thou hast given unto us the feeding of thy precious body.

O good Lord how marvellous be thy operations and how mighty is thy virtue and thy truth unable to be told. Thou hast said and all things were done and all that thou hast commanded hath taken effect.

A marvellous thing to be believed and far above the understanding of man that thou, my Lord God, very God and man, art wholly contained under a little likeness of bread and wine and thou art wholly received without consuming him that so receiveth thee.

Thou, Lord of all, that hast no need of any manner of thing yet thou hast willed to inhabit within us by this thy holy sacrament. Lord, keep my heart and my body undefiled to the end that with a pure and joyous conscience I may often receive to my everlasting health these holy mysteries which be instituted and ordained chiefly unto thine honour and perpetual remembrance

O my soul, rejoice thee and give thanks unto thy God for his noble gift and singular comfort that it will please him here in this vale of tears thus to comfort thee. For as oftentimes as thou rememberest this mystery and receivest this blessed body of our Lord, so often thou receivest the work of thy redemption and art made partner of all the merits of our Lord Jesu Christ. For his charity is never minished and the greatness of his mercy is never

consumed; wherefore thou oughtest to dispose thee alway with a new revolving of thy thought and oughtest to consider this great mystery of thy health by attentive raising of thy soul.

And this work ought to be unto thee as greatly new and joyous when thou receivest it as if that same day our Lord had first descended into the womb of the Virgin Mary to be made man; or as if he that day had suffered death for the health of man upon the cross.

CHAPTER III

WHAT GREAT PROFIT IT IS OFTEN TO RECEIVE THE BODY OF OUR LORD JESU CHRIST

LORD I come unto Thee to the end that wealth may come unto me of Thy gift and that I may joy at the holy feast that Thou hast made ready unto me, poor wretch, by thy sweet benignity in the which my Saviour is all that I may or ought to desire: for Thou art my health, my redemption, my strength, honour and joy.

Alas my Lord God make thy daily servant joyous. For my Lord Jesu I have raised my soul unto thee and now desire devoutly and reverently to receive thee into my house to the end that I may deserve with Zacchaeus to be blessed of thee and to be accompted among the children of Abraham.

My soul desireth thy body, my heart desireth to be united only with thee. Give thyself unto me good Lord and then I am sufficed, for without thee no consolation nor comfort is good; without thee I may not be and without thy visitation I may not live; wherefore it behoveth me oftentimes to come and approach to thy high presence to receive thee for the remedy of my health to the intent I fail not in the way of this mortal life if I am defrauded of thy spiritual nourishing.

Also my right merciful Lord Jesu when thou hast preached unto the people and healed them of divers sickness thou hast said "I will not leave them fasting and without any refection lest peradventure they might fail in their way."

Do with me then, good Lord, in that manner since thou hast left this holy sacrament for the comfort of all faithful people; for thou art the sweet refection of the souls of them that have worthily received and eaten thee and they shall be partners and also inheritors of the eternal joy.

Certain it is unto me necessary who so often sins and so soon cools and at every hour fails to come unto the end that by continual orisons and confessions and by the receiving of thy holy body I may purify and renew the heat of my refection. For peradventure in abstaining too long to receive thee, I may leave, forget and run from my good purpose.

For the wit of man and woman from their childhood be inclined unto all evil, and also if that this divine and godly medicine help us not, innocent we fall unto worse. Then this holy communion draweth men from evil and comforteth them again in goodness for I am many times very negligent and very often cooled when that I commune or worship my God. What should I then do if I took not that medicine and asked of him grace and help?

And albeit I am not alway well disposed to receive thy creature yet shall I put me unto pain to receive those sacred mysteries in time convenient so that I may be made partner of so great grace. For it is one of the most principal and greatest consolations unto faithful souls all the time they shall make their

pilgrimage in this mortal body and to the intent we may have the more mind of thy benefits.

My Lord God I shall more often receive thee, my loving Lord, with a devout thought. O marvellous gentleness of thine unspeakable pity towards us that thou, Lord God, creator and giver of life unto all spirits, hath willed to come to one so poor a soul with thy deity and humanity and hath granted to my poor lean and dry soul to be made fat with thy grace and thy holy unction of thy sweet spirit

O happy thought and well happy soul that deserveth devoutly to receive his God his Lord and creator and in that receiving to be fulfilled with joy and spiritual gladness.

O what great Lord receivest thou. O what and how great an host entertainest thou into thy lodging, how joyous a fellow takest thou into thy house, how faithful a friend thou admittest unto thee, and how good noble and sweet a spouse embracest thou which ought to be beloved and desired above all things.

O right sweet beloved Lord, the heaven and earth and all the ornaments of them hold silence in the presence of thy face. For what praise, honour and beauty they have it is of thy mercy and largeness and cannot be like unto the honour and beauty of thy holy name and of thy wisdom, whereof there is no number neither end.

CHAPTER IV

HOW MANY ADVANTAGES BE GIVEN UNTO THEM THAT DEVOUTLY RECEIVE THIS HOLY SACRAMENT

My Lord God I humbly beseech thee to prevent me thy servant in the blessings of thy sweet meekness, so that I may deserve to come worthily and devoutly to the holy sacrament most to be magnified. Stir my heart and loose it from the dull heaviness of my mortal body. Visit me with the messenger of health and give me to taste thy sweetness spiritual which is hid fully in the sacrament as in a fountain of all sweetness. Illumine mine eyes to behold this great mystery and strongly confirm me to believe the faith undoubtable; for it is thy work and not the power of man; it is thy holy ordinance and not (done) by man's device. For there is no man found able of himself to conceive and understand these holy mysteries which pass the subtlety of angels.

Then how may I poor unworthy sinner which am but earth and ashes search and conceive so high and holy secrecy? Lord I come unto thee in simpleness of heart and in firm faith and by thy commandment and with meek hope and reverence. And truly I believe that thou art here present in this holy sacrament, very God and man.

And thou wilt I shall receive thee and join me unto thee by charity: wherefore I humbly pray and require that it may please thee to give unto me thy special grace so that I may be all relented and flow over with thy love in such wise that I shall not desire any other consolation.

For this high worthy sacrament is the health of soul and body. It is the medicine of all spiritual sickness, in the which my sins be healed, passions be refrained, temptations be overcome and minished, more great graces be given, the virtue begun increased, faith is established, hope is made strong and fortified, charity is burning and spread abroad.

O my God the defender of my soul and the repairer of the weakness of man and the sender of all inward comfort, thou hast given and daily givest unto thy well beloved friends in this holy sacrament devoutly receiving it many advantages. For thou infusest into their souls great comfort against divers tribulations and from the depth of their own overthrowing thou arisest them to the hope of thy divine help. And with a new grace thou inwardly renewest and lightenest them in such wise that though they feel before the receiving of the sacrament heavy and dull and overthrown and without affection and moisture, of devotion after that they have been fed with this heavenly meat and drink they have found themselves changed with a marvellous joy: which things thou dost unto thy chosen people by dispensation of thy pure bounty so that they may truly know by open experience that they have

nor may have nothing of themselves; and what grace or goodness they have, it cometh of thee.

For of themselves they be cold, hard and undevout but of thee they be made fervent, joyous and devout: for who is he that cometh meekly unto the fountain of sweetness and shall not bring some little quantity of sweetness therefrom?

I shall alway put my mouth unto the hole of the heavenly pipe of that fountain so that I may at the least take a little drop to satisfy my thirst, so that I be not all dry; and though I may not be heavenly inflamed as the cherubim and seraphim yet will I enforce me to devotion and prepare my heart meekly to receive this holy loving sacrament and shall desire to be embraced with a little flame of that goodly love.

O good Jesu, holy and right piteous saviour, whatsoever virtue or goodness faileth in me I benignly beseech thee graciously of thy pity to supply it by thy great mercy. Thou that hast called all faithful creatures in saying unto them: Come ye all unto me that labour and be charged and I shall refresh you.

But alas, good Lord, I poor sinner labour in the sweat of my visage and am tormented with sorrow of heart. I am charged with sins and travailed with temptations, entricked and oppressed with many evil passions. And, Lord, there is none that may deliver me or make me safe but thou, my only God and saviour, to whom I commit me and all my causes to the end thou keep me and lead me to the life eternal.

Receive me unto the praise of thy name that hast made ready unto me thy precious body and blood for meat and drink. My Lord God and saviour grant unto me by thy great bounty that in customable (accustomed) receiving of thy holy mystery the affection and desire of my devotion may be increased.

CHAPTER V

OF THE DIGNITY OF THE SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR AND OF THE ORDER OF PRIESTHOOD

If thou hadst the purity of angels and the holiness of Saint John Baptist, thou shouldst not be worthy to receive or treat of that holy sacrament: for that is not due to the merits of men that a man should consecrate and treat of the sacrament of this blessed body of Jesu Christ and take in meat the bread of angels.

O the great mystery and the marvellous dignity of priests unto whom is given that that is not granted unto the angels. For the priests only, duly ordered in the church of Christ, have power to do and to consecrate the holy body of Jesu Christ. Certainly the priest is the minister of God using the word of God by the commandment and ordinance of God.

But God is the principal and invisible worker to whom be submitted all creatures to be ordered after his will and all to obey his commandment. Then thou oughtest more to believe in almighty God and in that right excellent sacrament than in thine own will or any other visible token: And therefore to this holy work thou oughtest to come with great dread and reverence.

Take good heed then and see from whom this mystery is given unto thee and that is by the putting to of

the hands of the Bishop thou art admitted unto that high room. Behold now thou art made a priest and consecrated to do this holy mystery. See then that faithfully and devoutly and in due time thou offer thy sacrifices unto God and show thyself irreprovable and without fault.

Thou hast not loosed thy charge (lightened thy burden) of living but hast bound thee with a more strait bond of discipline and art holden to a more great perfection of holiness. Also the priest ought to be adorned with all virtues and to give to all their example of good and holy life.

His conversation ought not to be with common people or the ways of common men but with the angels in heaven or with the perfect men in the earth. The priest clothed with holy vestments occupieth the room of our Lord Jesu Christ to the end that he may right humbly pray unto God for himself and also for all others. For he hath both before him and behind him the very sign of the cross that he may continually remember the passion of our Lord Jesu Christ. Before him he beareth the cross to the end that he may diligently behold the traces and the example of our Lord Jesu Christ and that he may fervently study to follow them. Behind him also he is signed with the cross to the intent he should suffer for the honour of God all adversities and injuries done unto him of other. Before him he beareth the cross for that he should bewail properly his sins; and behind him likewise to sorrow with great compassion for the sins of others and to know himself that he is a man between God and the sinner: And that he should depart not from

orison and from that holy oblation till he deserves to purchase the grace of God. When the priest saith mass he honoureth God, he giveth joy unto the angels, he edifieth the church, he helpeth the loving people, he giveth rest to them that be passed and maketh himself partner of all good works.

CHAPTER VI

AN INWARD REMEMBRANCE AND EXERCISE THAT A MAN OUGHT TO HAVE AFORE THE RECEIVING OF THE BODY OF OUR LORD JESU CHRIST

LORD when I think of thy worthiness and of my great filthiness I tremble strongly and am confounded in myself. For if I receive thee not I flee the eternal life and if I unworthily receive thee I run into thy wrath. What shall I then do, my good Lord, my helper, protector, comforter, and right sure counsellor in all mine infirmities and necessities? Teach me good Lord thy right way, and purpose unto me some exercise fit to the receiving of this holy mystery. For it is necessary unto me and greatly profitable to know how devoutly and reverently I ought to prepare my heart to receive this holy sacrament or to make so goodly sacrifice.

CHAPTER VII

THE REMEMBRING OF HIS OWN CONSCIENCE WITH PURPOSE OF AMENDMENT

THE priest above all things ought to desire with sovereign reverence and profound meekness of heart, full and firm faith, humble hope and piteous (pious) intent to the honour of God to celebrate, take and receive this worthy sacrament, to examine diligently and make clear and open the conscience by true contrition and make confession as far as he hath power, so that thou know nothing that grieves thee or bites thy said conscience or lets (hinders) thee freely to come unto the same daily.

To have displeasure of all thy sins in general and for thine excesses and sins thou oughest to have sighing and sorrow more special. And if the time suffer it confess unto God in secret of thy heart the miseries of all thy passions, weep and have sorrow that thou art yet so carnal and worldly and so ill mortified from thy passions, so full of motions and lusts, so ill composed and ordered in thy outward wits, so often applied unto vain fantasies, so much inclined unto outward things, so negligent in the inward spiritual things, so ready to laughter and to all dissolution, so hard to weep and to compunction, so ready to follow the loose manner and the pleasures of the flesh, so slow and dull to the fervour of virtue,

so curious to behold and to hear new fair things, so negligent and loath to learn and desire things that be meek and abject, so covetous to receive and possess many goods, and so scarce (sparing) to give them and glad to hold and retain them, so evil advised in speaking and so incontinent to be still, so unordered in manners, so importune in thy deeds, so greedy and so quick in thy meat, so deaf unto the word of God, so ready to rest, so unhasty to labour, so waking to fables, so sleepy to holy vigils, so negligent unto the service of God, so speedy to the end thereof, so wavering to take heed, so cold in devotion in the time of the mass, so dry in receiving of the sacrament, so soon withdrawn, so seldom well gathered unto thyself, so suddenly moved unto wrath, so easily stirred to the displeasure of others, so hasty to judge, so rough in reproving, so joyous in prosperity, so weak in adversity, so often purposing many good things and bringing little to effect.

These and other thy defaults with sorrow and great displeasure of thine own frailty must be confessed and sorrowfully be wept. Set thee then with full purpose always to amend thyself and to perfect thee from better unto better; and, after, offer thyself with plain resignation and entire will to the honour of my name a perpetual sacrifice within the altar of thine heart.

Then, thy soul and body commit faithfully unto me, that thou so may deserve worthily to come and offer thy sacrifice to God and to receive the sacrament of my body healthfully. For no oblation is more worthy and no satisfaction can be so great for

to deface the sins of man as to offer himself to God purely and entirely with the oblation of the holy body of Christ Jesu in the mass and the holy communion.

And they who ever shall do as much as lieth in them and have true repentance of their offences past, as oft as they shall come unto me, they shall recover pardon and grace.

I am Life and will not the death of a sinner, but rather will that he return and live again. And then will I no more remember his sins and trespass but all shall be forgiven and pardoned unto him.

CHAPTER VIII

OF THE OBLATION OF JESU CHRIST ON THE CROSS; OF THE PROPER RESIGNATION THAT MAN SHOULD MAKE OF HIMSELF.

O Man, as I did offer myself and my free-will unto God my father, my hands spread on the cross, and my body naked for thy sins; insomuch that nothing remained in me, but all passed in sacrifice to appease His wrath, in like wise thou oughtest to offer unto me willingly thyself in pure oblation daily in the mass with all thine affections and strengths, as profoundly and fervently as thou mayest.

What ask I of thee more but that thou study to resign thyself unto me entirely? What thing so ever thou givest me else I care not for.

For I demand not thy gifts but only thyself.

As nothing should suffice thee without me, likewise nothing may please me what soever thou shalt give if thou offer not thyself to me.

Offer thee then, give thee wholly unto me: and that oblation shall be acceptable.

Behold I did offer myself wholly unto my father for thee, and for thee I did give all my body and blood, to the end that I should be all wholly thine, and thou mine also.

But and if thou rest in thyself and present thee not with good will unto me then there is no full oblation

neither entire perfect union between us; for the free oblation of thyself into the hands of almighty God ought to go before all thy works, if thou wouldst obtain liberty and grace.

And the lack of this is the cause that so few folk be illumined and have inward liberty, for they cannot renounce themselves.

My sentence is firm and stable, that none may be my disciple, without he renounceth all that he hath.

Then if thou desire to be my disciple offer thyself unto me with all thine affection.

CHAPTER IX

THAT WE OUGHT TO OFFER UNTO GOD ALL THAT WE HAVE; AND TO PRAY FOR ALL PEOPLE

LORD, all things that be in heaven and in earth be thine, and my willing desire is to offer me unto thee perpetually in oblation, so that I may be thine everlastingly.

And this day, good Lord, I offer unto thee myself perpetually for ever more to be thy servant with my heart and soul fully to continue. I beseech thee receive this holy oblation of me that am unworthy to offer me unto thy precious body in the presence of angels assisting invisible, to the end that it may be to the health of one and all thy people. Lord I also offer unto thee all my sins which I have committed before thee and thy holy angels since the first day I began or in any wise might sin unto this present day. And I beseech thee to inflame me with the burning fire of charity and to deface and put away all the conditions of my sins. Cleanse my conscience from all sin and restore it unto thy grace which by sin I have lost. And perfectly pardon me of all mine offences that I may receive perfectly the sweet kiss of peace. What can I do more for my sins but meekly confess them with sorrowful weeping and incessantly praying to thee of thy piteous mercy?

I beseech thee Lord exalt me and be ready unto me when I am before thee. O my good Lord greatly all my sins displease me and by thy grace I will never begin them again; but ever shall have sorrow for them as long as I shall live and shall be ready to do penance and make satisfaction to the best of my little power. Wherefore now good Lord pardon me of my great and abominable sins and for the honour of thy holy name save my soul which thou hast dearly bought with thy most precious blood. And I commit me good Lord unto thy great mercy and resign me wholly unto thy hands. Do with me Lord after thy bounty and not after my malice and iniquity.

Also I offer unto thee all my deeds that I have done albeit they be full few and imperfect that thou mayst sanctify and amend them as they be agreeable and acceptable unto thee. And always good Lord draw me from better to better and conduct and lead me slothful and unworthy sinner unto a good and lawful end.

In like wise I offer unto thee the desires of all devout persons, the necessities of my kinsfolk and friends and of all them that have done me good or be dear unto me and all other for thy love, and they that have desired or required me to make sacrifice for their friends, living or past the world, so that they may feel help, Consolation, Defence, and Preservation from all perils, and deliverance of pains by thy grace so that they may yield unto thee joy and gladness with magnifying and praise for their deliverance.

I offer unto thee also prayer and holy oblations for all

them specially that have caused unto me heaviness, hurt, or any manner of damage; and likewise for them that I have troubled, grieved, vexed or slandered in words or deeds, knowingly or ignorantly, to the end, blessed Lord, that we all may be pardoned of our offences done the one against the other. And good Lord Jesu take from our heart all suspicion, wrath and indignation, and all that may break or let (hinder) charity, or diminish us from thine eternal love.

O Lord, have pity; blessed Jesu, have pity; and give thy mercy unto all them that ask it and thy grace unto them that have need. And make us so worthy to have thy grace that we may go unto the life eternal. Amen.

CHAPTER X

THAT THE HOLY SACRAMENT OUGHT NOT LIGHTLY TO BE FORBORNE

It behoveth thee often to return unto the fountain of grace, mercy, bounty, pity and purity that thou mayst be cleansed from thy vices and passions, so that thou mayst be made more strong and waking against all temptations and subtle crafts of the fiend.

For thine enemy knowing the great fruit and remedy in receiving of this holy sacrament, striveth, by all manner of occasions that he may, to draw thee unto him again and hindereth the faithful and devout people when any dispose them to the receiving of this holy communion.

The enemy, Satan, putteth to them the most grievous temptations that he may. Also, it is written in the history of Job, this evil spirit cometh among the children of God to the end that by his cursed custom he perturbeth, perplexeth and maketh them fearful, diminishing their affection and impugning them of their faith, so that peradventure they leave their good purpose in respect of that holy body which they at that time come for to receive.

But we should take no thought nor fear of the crafty wiles of that false enemy that be so foul and

horrible, but all such fantasies we should cast again at the head of that wicked spirit.

It is a poor mischievous spirit, that so letteth (hindereth) and mocketh us; and for any assaults or commotions that he exciteth, this holy sacrament ought not to be left.

Also oftentimes too great solicitude for devotion hindereth us, and sometimes seriousness about the confession to be made. But do after the counsel of the wise and take away this anxiety and stryple (scruple): for it hindereth the grace of God and destroyeth devotion.

And leave not the holy receiving of Jesu Christ for little tribulation, dejection or faint heart; but with good will go to the confessor, and pardon all other that have offended thee; and if thou have offended any other, meekly ask forgiveness. And then dread not but God will pardon *thee*.

What profiteth it long to tarry from confession or to defer the receiving of thy blessed saviour? First purge thee and cast out the venom and then haste thee to take the remedy, and thou shalt feel the much better than if thou hadst deferred it.

For if thou this day leave the holy receiving for coldness of devotion and feebleness of mind, peradventure to-morrow thou shalt find thyself more slack, and withdraw so long that thou shalt find thyself much worse and more unable.

Then as soon as thou mayst take away this feebleness of mind and the spice (species) of sloth; for to be always only in anguish and heaviness for thy sin, passing the time in tribulation and because of daily obstacles and imperfections to withdraw thee from

these divine mysteries without turning unto the pitiful merit of our saviour Christ Jesu, this profiteth thee not.

But the long tarrying to receive thy saviour annoyeth thee greatly and maketh thee slow and shall bring daily unto thee a greater slothfulness.

But, alas for sorrow, some cold and desolate persons gladly seek reasons for tarrying from confession and from the receiving of this holy sacrament; because they covet many delays lest they shall be bound to give themselves to a stricter manner in the ordering of their life.

Alas how little charity and how slender devotion have they that put away so easily the receiving of this holy sacrament.

O how happy be they and agreeable unto almighty God who lead so holy a life that they keep their conscience in clean and pure fear, so that they may daily dispose themselves and make them ready and with great affection desire to receive that holy sacrament at all times, if it were lawful.

Nevertheless sometimes by meekness to abstain or for other lawful causes that may hinder reverence, this is to be praised.

But if sloth or negligence keep him back he ought to endeavour himself as far as in him is, and our Lord shall be present to his desire and will specially behold his good will; but when he is lawfully hindered and have a good will and pious mind to receive his maker, he shall not fail to have the fruit of that blessed sacrament.

For every person with perfect devotion may every day receive that holy sacrament spiritually to his health

and without prohibition; and in certain times and days established he ought to receive the body of his saviour with effectual reverence sacramentally; and to seek and do it more to the praise and honour of God almighty than to his own consolation.

For as often as he spiritually is communed and refreshed invisibly so often he remembreth devoutly the mystery of the incarnation of Christ and his painful passion and is kindled in love of him; he that otherwise prepareth not himself except at the time of a great feast or else when compelled by custom he shall oftentimes be full unready.

Blessed is he that offers himself unto almighty God as oft as he doth the mass or else receives this honourable sacrament.

And in doing this mystery, tarry not nor be too hasty but keep the common manner with such as thou livest among. Thou oughtest not to do so that the hearers thereof take grief or irksomeness but keep the common way after the ordinances of the holy fathers. And rather conform thee to the profit of others than to thine own devotion or private pleasure.

CHAPTER XI

HOW THE BLESSED BODY OF OUR LORD JESU CHRIST IS GREATLY NECESSARY FOR THE HEALTH OF MAN'S SOUL

O RIGHT sweet Jesu how great consolation and sweetness is it to a devout soul to eat with thee at thy dinner where none other meat is given but thyself which art the only lover and oughtest to be desired above all desires of man's heart: and how sweet a thing should it be in thy presence from the bottom of the heart to send out tears, to dew and wash thy precious feet with the piteous Magdalen. But where is that devotion or the plenteous effusion of holy tears?

Certainly in beholding thee with thy holy angels all my heart ought to burn and weep with joy: for I have verily thee present, though thou be hid under a strange likeness, for mine eyes may not suffer to behold thee in thy proper and godly clearness: nor might all the world abide to behold the clearness of thy joy and majesty.

Wherefore, good Lord, thou helpest my weakness in that it pleaseth thee to cover thyself under the form of that holy sacrament.

I verily worship thee whom the angels worship in

heaven, but in me it is as yet but in faith and the angels worship thee there in thine own likeness without coverture.

I must be content with true faith and so walk till the day come of eternal clearness when the shadow of figures shall vanish; for when that perfect day shall come the usage of this holy sacrament shall cease.

For they that be blessed in heavenly joy shall have no need of any sacramental medicine: for they shall joy without end in the presence of God, seeing him in his glory face to face and shall be transformed from clearness unto clearness with the Godhead incomprehensible: they shall taste the son of God made man as he was from the beginning and shall be everlastingly.

I then remembering me of the great marvels and solace though it be spiritual, it is to me grievous when I remember those marvels. For all things that I hear or see in this world I count as nothing so long as I see not my Lord God in his glory.

Lord God, thou art my witness that nothing can give me comfort nor no creature may give me rest but thou my Lord God whom I desire eternally to behold.

But that is a thing to me not possible while that I am in this mortal life; wherefore it behoveth me with great patience to order myself and meekly to submit me unto thee in all my desires.

Good Lord, the saints that now joy with thee in the kingdom of heaven abode the coming of the joy with great faith and patience as long as they lived.

I believe the same that they did believe, and hope as they have hoped, and trust by the means of thy grace to come thither as they now be.

In the meanwhile I shall in good and fast faith be comforted by examples of holy saints. Also I have full virtuous and holy books for the consolation and mirror of my life and also above all these things thy sacred body for my singular refuge and remedy. I feel that two things be unto me right necessary without which this miserable life should be unto me inportable. For as long as I shall be holden in this present body I confess me to have need of two things, that is to know (say) of meat and light.

But therefore thou hast given unto me which am poor and sick thy holy body to the refreshing of my soul and body, and also thou hast put before my faith the light of thy holy word; and without these two things I may not well live spiritually; for thy word, my Lord and God, is the light of my soul and the holy sacrament is the bread of my life.

These two things so necessary may also be called the tables set on either side in the treasury of holy church; the one table is of the holy altar having this lovely bread, that is to say, the precious body of Jhesu Christ; the other is the law of God containing the holy doctrine and showing the right faith and surely guiding me unto the inward sacrifice where are the holy jewels called Sancta Sanctorum (Holy of Holies).

I yield unto thee thanks Lord Jesu Christ which art the very clearness of eternal light for this table of holy

doctrine which thou hast ministered unto us by thy servants, prophets, apostles and other doctors; and I yield unto thee thanks again, creator and redeemer of mankind, which hast declared thy great charity unto all the world and hast prepared this royal supper in the which thou hast not purposed to be eaten the figurative lamb but thy most holy body and precious blood rejoicing all thy creatures by that sacred banquet and sweetly fulfilling them with that healthful chalice, wherein be hid all the delights and joys of Paradise; and the holy angels be fed with us with sweetness very plenteous.

O how great and honourable is the office of priests to whom is given power to consecrate by divine words, to bless with their lips, to hold with their hands, receive with their mouths and to minister unto other the Lord and God of all majesty. O how clean ought to be the hands, how pure the mouth, how holy the body and how undefiled the heart of a priest unto whom so often entereth the author of all purity.

Certainly from the mouth of a priest ought no word to proceed but that which is honest and profitable, that so often receiveth sacrament of the holy body of Jesu Christ; his eyes ought to be simple and shamefast that so customably behold the holy body· the hands pure to lift up unto heaven which handle the creator of heaven and earth. For specially for a priest it is said in the law, Be ye holy for I your Lord God am holy. O God omnipotent thy grace be helping unto us that we which have taken the office of priesthood may reverently and devoutly serve thee with all purity and good con-

science and if we may not live in so great innocency of life as we ought to do, give us grace at the least that we may weep and sorrow for the evils that we have committed and done, so that in spiritual meekness and purpose of good will we may from henceforth strongly serve thee with fervent courage.

CHAPTER XII

WITH HOW GREAT DILIGENCE HE OUGHT TO PREPARE HIMSELF THAT SHOULD RECEIVE THE SACRAMENT OF CHRIST

Our Lord saith: I the lover of purity and the liberal giver of all holiness, I search the pure clean heart and there will I rest. Make ready then for me thine heart and I shall be with thee then as I was with my disciples at Easter (the Passover)

I shall come and dwell with thee if thou wilt, but then it behoveth thee to purify and cleanse the habitation of thine heart from all sins, leave all bruit (sound) and noise of the world with all thy vices, and inclose and shut thee in thy chamber, as doth a solitary bird under the evesings (eaves) of a house, and remember all the excuses and all thy defaults committed; remember them with all thy soul and with bitterness of heart.

For a good friend will make ready for his well beloved friend a good and a pleasant place to dwell in and in doing that it is well known with what good affection he receiveth his said friend.

It is for truth that thou oughtest to understand that thou canst not give satisfaction by any merit or labour of thyself, not and if thou diddest labour with the best of thy power by a whole year, though thou haddest none other thing to do.

But thou shalt understand that by my power only and grace it is permitted and granted unto thee to come to my table and that if a poor man were called unto the table of a rich lord and the poor man had none other thing to give again for the benefit of that rich man but sweetly and meekly to thank him, he would do it.

So oughtest thou to do diligently as much as is in thee and not by custom or necessity, but with all dread, reverence and affection thou oughtest to take the blessed body of our Lord God since that it pleaseth him to come unto thee.

Certainly I am he that calleth thee and I have commanded it so to be done and I shall supply that which faileth in thee; wherefore come and receive me and when in doing that I give unto thee grace of devotion, yield thou thanks unto me thy God, not thinking that thou art worthy thereof of thyself but that I have had mercy on thee.

And if thou have not that grace when thou wouldest but feel thyself dry and unlusty, yet continue thine orison with sorrowful weeping and smite at my door without ceasing unto the time that thou mayst receive a little crumb or drop of healthful grace and know of a truth thou hast much need of me and I have none of thee.

Thou comest not to sanctify me but I am he that shall sanctify thee and make thee better to the end that thou mayst be united with me to receive new grace and to purpose amendment.

Be not willing to defer my grace but with all diligence prepare thine heart to receive within thee thy loving Lord. And not only prepare thee before

thy communion, but also maintain and keep thee after the receiving of thy said holy sacrament in that same devotion in as much as thou mayst: for thou oughtest to have no less diligence than thou hadst afore.

For the good and diligent keeping of thy soul after the receiving of the blessed sacrament is a good preparation to obtain greater grace. And they that do not so, show themselves greatly evil-disposed when they abandon themselves so soon and so largely to outward solace and inward pleasures.

Wherefore keep thee from great bruit (sound) and speaking and abide in the secret graces and fruits of thy God, for thou hast him that all the world may not take away; and I am he to whom thou oughtest to give thyself in such manner that from henceforth thou live no more in thyself but in me only.

CHAPTER XIII

HOW THE DEVOUT SOUL OUGHT EFFECTUALLY WITH ALL HIS HEART TO BE UNITED UNTO JESU CHRIST

O LORD who shall grant me that I may find thee alone and that I may open to thee all my heart and joy with thee as my poor soul desireth and that here there be no creature to behold me but thou alone to speak to me and I to thee, good Lord, as of custom one friend speaketh to another secretly.

This I desire and pray thee, Lord Jesu, that I may be fully united unto thee and withdraw my heart from all other created things, that I may the sooner learn the eternal and heavenly things by means of the receiving of this holy sacrament.

Alas, my good Lord, when shall I be united and gathered all wholly in thee and utterly forget myself? Thou art in me and I with thee and thus assembled make us dwell together I pray thee.

Truly thou art my chosen and beloved Lord and it hath pleased thy benign grace to be inhabited in my soul all the days of my life. Thou art my peace-maker in whom is sovereign peace and true rest; without thee there is nothing but labour, sorrow and infinite misery.

Thou my God are closed and hid and thy counsel is not shared by evil folks: but thy familiar speaking is with the meek and simple folks.

O Lord, how good, benign and sweet is thy spirit which, that thou mayst show unto the sons and children they sweetness, hast vouched safe to refresh them again and gives to them refection of thy right sweet bread descended from heaven.

Certainly there is none other so great a nation, lacking Christ's faith, that hath their gods so near unto them as thou art, our God and Lord, to all thy faithful Christian people to whom thou givest thy blessed body to eat for their daily comfort and to raise their hearts to high celestial things. O what other folks be there so noble as the Christian people or what creature is there so strongly beloved under heaven as is the devout soul in whom God entereth and giveth feeding with his own glorious flesh and blood.

O grace inestimable and marvellous worthiness. O love without measure singularly shewed unto man. But what shall I yield unto God? and wherewith shall I recompense this so great grace and charity? Truly there is nothing I may give more agreeable to his mercy than to join my heart perfectly unto him.

And when my soul shall be perfectly united with him, then shall all my inward parts rejoice and then my Lord will say unto me, If thou wilt be with me I will be with thee. And I shall answer him, Blessed Lord I beseech thee dwell with me, for all the desire of my heart is to be with thee inseparable without departing.

CHAPTER XIV

OF THE BURNING DESIRE THAT SOME CREATURES HAVE TO THE BLESSED BODY OF OUR LORD JESU CHRIST

O LORD, how great is the multitude of thy sweetness which thou hast hid for them that dread thee. When I remember me of many devout persons that have come to this thy holy sacrament with so great fervent affection and devotion I am then many times in myself confused and have great shame that I go unto the altar and table of that holy communion so rudely, with so cold devotion and am so dry without affection of heart.

I am abashed that I am not all wholly inflamed in thy presence and so strongly drawn and established as many good devout persons have been, which by the great desire of this holy sacrament and sensible love of heart might not contain nor withhold them from weeping, but effectually with mouth, heart and body come unto that good Lord as to the living fountain of all bounty and may not attain to fulfil their hunger unless they take thy holy body which they so desirously and spiritually may receive.

O true and benign faith of them that prevably (truly) show the proof of thy holy presence; to them is verily known their God in the breaking of bread which burneth and broileth so strongly the heart of them in the love of Jesu Christ: certainly such

affection, devotion and vehement burning love is far from me.

O good sweet and benign Jhesu be unto me piteous and ready to give and grant to thy poor beggar sometimes to feel a little of that hearty love and affection in the receiving of thy holy body to the end that my faith may be more firm and my hope more perfect in thy bounty; and my charity sometime so perfectly inflamed that I may experiently have the heavenly manna that never may fail: I know certainly the might of thy mercy may lend me thy grace so much desired and visit me burningly with a burning spirit when the day of thy good pleasure shall come.

And though I be not inflamed with so great a desire of thy special devout things yet have I desire by thy grace to be inflamed with that burning love praying the good Lord that I may be made partner with all such thy fervent lovers and that I may be numbered in their devout company. Amen.

CHAPTER XV

HOW MEEKLY THOU OUGHTEST TO BESEECH THE GRACE OF DEVOTION AND TO RENOUNCE THYSELF

It behoveth thee instantly to seek the grace of devotion and to ask incessantly, to abide it patiently and faithfully, joyously to receive it and meekly to conserve it, and with that studiously to remit unto God the time and the manner of his sovereign visitation unto the time his pleasure be to come unto thee: and principally thou oughtest to meek (humble) thee when thou feelest but little devotion within thee: and for all that thou oughtest not to let thyself to fall or sorrow too much inordinately: for full often our blessed Lord in a short moment giveth thee which before he hath long time denied: also sometime he giveth at the end of prayers that he did defer at the beginning of the same.

If alway grace were so soon given that a man might have it at his will or wish, it should not be easily borne of a weak and imperfect soul. And therefore in good hope and meek patience the grace of devotion ought to be abided (waited for) and thou oughtest to impute it unto thyself and to thy sins when it is not given unto thee or when it is secretly taken away from thee. Some time a little thing it is that may let (hinder) or hide thy grace if that may

be called little that letteth (hindreth) so great avail (good).

But be it little or great if thou take that same away and perfectly overcome it thou shalt obtain that thou desirest as soon as thou with all thy heart hast given thyself to God. And therefore seek not this nor that at thy pleasure but put the whole in the hand of God and thou shalt certainly find thyself right with him and in great peace of soul; for there is nothing that ought to be so savoury and pleasant as is the pleasure and divine will of God.

Then whosoever lifteth up his intent unto God with a simple perfect heart and so voideth and maketh him naked of all disordinate love or pleasure to any created things in all the world he is most meet to receive the gift of devotion; for our Lord gave his blessing there where he found the vessels clean and void; and the more perfectly that any renounce, mortify, despise and contemn themselves and all the low things, the sooner grace shall enter and copiously abound so that he shall feel his heart lift up as though it were set in freedom and then he shall see his heart largely abound and marvellously joy within himself, for that the hand of God shall be over him and he shall submit him perpetually into his holy hands.

And so shall the man be blessed that seeketh God with all his heart and his soul shall not be taken in vain works: but such an one certainly in the receiving the holy body of Jesu Christ meriteth and deserveth the grace of divine union with God. For he beholdeth not only his own devotion and consolation but the great honour and glory of God.

CHAPTER XVI

HOW WE OUGHT TO SHOW OUR NECESSITIES UNTO JESU CHRIST AND ASK OF HIM BENIGN GRACE

O RIGHT sweet and most beloved Lord whom I now desire to receive, thou, good Lord, knowest the sickness of soul and necessity that I suffer, in what evils and vices I sleeping am put, how often grieved, tempted, troubled and dissolute. I come unto thee, Lord, to have consolation and comfort. I speak to thee Lord; thou knowest all my secret and inward thoughts which be manifest and open unto thee. It is thou only that perfectly mayst help me, for thou knowest what unto me is necessary and of what goods above all other I have most need.

Albeit I am poor in virtue, alas, yet, merciful Lord, behold me here before thee poor and naked, demanding piteously thy sweet grace and mercy. And give thy poor beggar that dieth for hunger some of thy heavenly refection and chafe my cold heart with the burning flame of thy love. Illumine me that am blinded and cannot see with the clearness of thy presence; take away from my thought all the earthly and inward things and turn them into, and make me think them, foul and bitter and grievous and contrary unto me.

And that I may take pleasure in the things that may please thee; and all earthly created things may I

have in oblivion and turn my heart towards thee in heaven. And let me not waver nor err upon earth but be thou only my sweetness and consolation, my meat and drink, my love and all my joy; so that my will be changed, inflamed, and burn all towards thee; so that I may be made a spirit and inwardly united unto thee by grace and burning love.

And suffer me not, blessed saviour, to depart from thee fasting and dry with hunger and thirst, but do with me mercifully as often thou hast marvellously done with thy holy servants.

What marvel it is to me that I am not all inflamed in thee seeing that thou art the burning fire always illumining and lightening the understanding of thy creatures.

CHAPTER XVII

OF THE BURNING LOVE AND GREAT AFFECTION THAT WE SHOULD HAVE TO RECEIVE OUR SAVIOUR CHRIST JESU

O LORD God, in sovereign devotion, burning love and all fervent affection of heart I desire as many other holy and devout persons have desired to receive, who have been greatly pleasant by the holiness of their life and by great devotion.

O my God and eternal love and my eternal felicity I by right great desire wish to receive thee as worthily and as reverently as ever did any of thy holy servants. Albeit that I am not worthy to have so great feelings of devotion, yet offer I unto thee the affections of my heart as truly as though I had all the burning and flaming desires that they had.

Also I give and offer unto thee in sovereign reverence and veneration all that a good debonair heart may contain. And I will not nor do I covet to reserve anything to myself but I offer and make sacrifice unto thee with free and perfect will of myself with all my goods.

Lord God, my creator and redeemer, this day I desire to receive thee with such affection, reverence, praise, honour, worthiness and love and with such faith hope and purity as thy right holy mother and glorious Virgin Mary who conceived thee, when she

answered meekly and devoutly unto the angel that showed unto her the holy mystery of the incarnation of thee, the son of God, "See here the handmaid of God; so be it done as thou hast said."

And the right excellent precursor St. John Baptist that with great joy sprang in thy presence by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, then being in the womb of his mother; and afterward beholding thee Jesu walking meekly among men, he greatly humbling himself to the same with a devout mind said: "The friend of the spouse standeth and hearkneth and with comfort rejoiceth for to hear the voice of the spouse." So I wish to be inflamed with great and holy desire and with all my heart present me unto thee.

And I give and offer unto thee for me all the jubilations of devout hearts with burning affections, the excessive thoughts, the high and spiritual illuminations and the heavenly visions with all the virtues and praises, as well celebrated as those which shall be celebrated, of all the creatures of heaven and earth; to the end that thou, Lord, be worthily praised and be perpetually glorified of all creatures; beseeching thee, Lord, to receive my prayers and my desire for thine infinite benediction and praises without end which rightly be due unto thee according to the great abundance and multitude of thine inestimable magnificence. And so my desire is to yield unto thee at all hours and all moments of time; and so I desire and beseech all the heavenly spirits with all faithful Christian creatures to yield unto thee praises with effectual prayers.

All the universal people praise thee. All generations and kinds magnify thy holy and sweet name in great joy and burning devotion, and I pray that they who celebrate that right high and holy sacrament and receive it in plain faith and great reverence and devotion may merit well towards thee and find grace and mercy.

And for me, wretched sinner, I meekly beseech thee, when I shall have a taste of that sweet union and devotion so much wished and desired that I may be fulfilled and fed so marvellously at that heavenly and holy table that at my departing from thence, thou, good Lord, wilt have me, poor sinner, in thy piteous remembrance.

CHAPTER XVIII

THAT A MAN SHOULD NOT BE TOO CURIOUS AN INQUISITOR OF THAT HOLY SACRAMENT, BUT A MEEK FOLLOWER OF CHRIST JESU IN SUBMITTING HIS REASON AND FEELING TO THE HOLY FAITH

It behoves thee to keep thee from too curious inquisition of the right deep sacrament if thou wilt not be confounded in thine own fault and drowned in the depth of opinions. For he that will inquire of the high majesty of God, he shall anon be oppressed and thrust down from the glory of the same. God may open more than man may understand.

The devout and meek inquiry of truth is always ready to be instructed and taught; and if thou study to go by the holy and entire sentences of holy fathers, it is not reprovable but well to be praised. And that simpleness is well to be praised which leaveth the ways of difficulties and questions and goeth by the plain and firm path of the commandments of God. Many have lost their devotion in seeking so busily high unspeakable things.

It is enough to demand of thee fast faith, pure and clean life, and not the high and subtle profound mysteries of God; for if thou canst not comprehend and understand that which is within thee, how canst thou then understand things that be above thee?

Submit thee then meekly unto God and all thy under-

standing to the faith of holy church; and the light of true science shall be given unto thee such as shall be to thee most necessary and profitable.

Some be greatly tempted with the faith of that holy sacrament but that is not to be reputed (set down) unto them but rather unto that cursed enemy the fiend.

And therefore care not nor dispute not in thy thoughts nor answer not to the doubts that the enemy of hell bringeth before thee; but firmly trust in the words of God and believe in saints and holy prophets and then shall that cursed enemy soon fly from thee. It is often profitable that the servants of God suffer and sustain such assaults; for the enemy tempteth not the miscreants and unfaithful people, nor also the great sinners that he surely holdeth and possesseth; but he tempteth, travaileth and tormenteth in divers manners the good faithful and Christian creatures.

And therefore keep thee always with meek true faith and doubt thee not but come unto this holy sacrament with long reverence, and that thou canst not understand commit unto almighty God for he shall not deceive thee but he shall be deceived that too much trusteth in himself.

God walked with the simple people and showed himself openly unto the meek; he gave understanding unto them that were poor in spirit, and hid his grace and secrets from them that were proud, high and curious.

For the human reason may lightly err and be deceived but the true faith may never deceive nor fail. All reason and natural inquiry ought to follow the true

faith without further reasoning. Fast faith and true love surmounteth all curious inquiry principally in this matter and marvellously openeth to an understanding in secret manner of this holy and right excellent sacrament.

O eternal God and without measure of height and bounty, which hast made the infinite great and wonderful things in the heaven and earth, none is sufficient to inquire into, understand or find the secrets of thy so marvellous works; and therefore they be called inestimable for man's reason neither may nor can comprehend thy works; to whom Lord God almighty be given laud and praise, without end. Amen.

Thus endeth the fourth book following Jesu Christ and the contemning of the world.

Imprinted at London in Fleet Street at the Sign of the Sun by Wynkyn de Worde

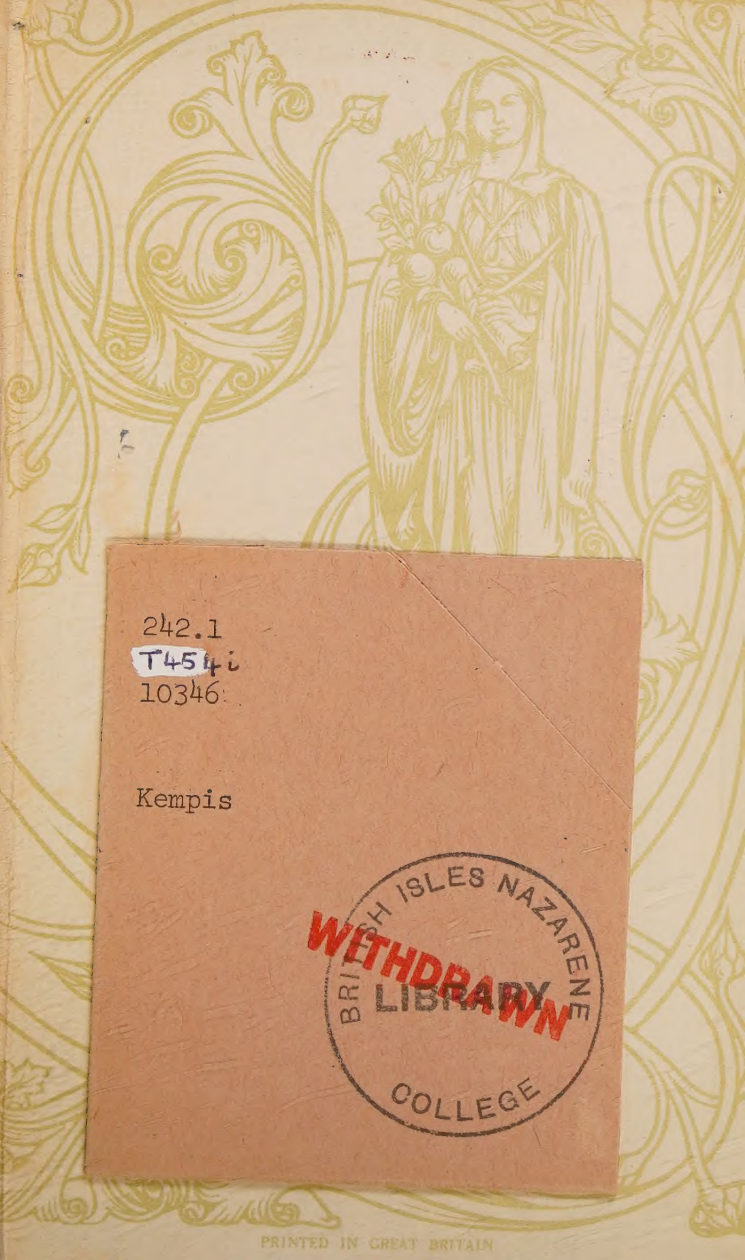
Made At The Temple Press Letchworth In Great Britain

Nazarene Theological College
B09291
WITHDRAWN

This book is to be returned on or before the last date stamped below.

27 APR 1983	24 JAN 1995	
- 1 NOV 1989	14 MAR 1996	
4 DEC 1991	- 2 OCT 1996	
- 7 APR 1992	20 NOV 1996	
30 MAR [illegible]	19 FEB 1998	
- 6 APR 1993		
27 APR 1993		
- 4 MAY 1993		
11 MAY 1993		
18 MAY 1993		
- 9 NOV 1993		
29 APR 1994		
Summer 94 CH 610		

LIBREX –



242.1
T454i
10346

Kempis

BRITISH ISLES NAZARENE COLLEGE
WITHDRAWN
LIBRARY

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN